THE LORD'S PRAYER

CHARLES F. AKED

The Lord's Prayer

Its Meaning and Message for To-day

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To
My Loyal and Loving Comrades
the
Trustees and Deacons
of the
Fifth Avenue Baptist Church,
in
Cordial Appreciation
of their
Endeavour to Realize
in
Human Affairs
the
Meaning and Message of the Lord's
Prayer

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OUR Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.

I

Our Father, Who Art in Heaven

. . . . With filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say, "My Father made it all!"

—*Cowper.*

I

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

IS there anything new to be said about the Lord's Prayer? And will this busy world condescend to heed? Has it any meaning, any message, for the men and women of our day?

All that can be said surely has been said—has been said ten thousand times ten thousand times in every language and in all generations since the Hill Sermon was preached by Jesus Christ. Yet one of the really surprising things in human life is our ignorance of those things about which we suppose we know so much. Let us admit that the meaning and message of the Prayer are old, wonderfully old, and still we may be thankful for the new. We worship a God who, as Tennyson says, "fulfills Himself from day to day," and who, according to the vision of John, sits upon the throne and says, *Behold, I make all things new.* Yet amongst the oldest things of life are some of the greatest and dearest. Motherhood and

fatherhood are old—all but the oldest facts and forces in the life-story of the human race. And love is old; when it throbs in fresh young hearts and opens wonder-worlds and mystic heavens to man and maid, themselves divinely new beneath its kindling touch, it is old with the primeval impulse of the Eden story and with the yet older and compelling passion of the Eternal who "dove-like sat brooding o'er the vast abyss," of whom the Scripture says *God is love*. The old truths of the Lord's Prayer may yet appeal to us with new meaning and power.

Our Father, who art in heaven—so the prayer begins. It is the greatest word on mortal tongue, and the truth of the universal Fatherhood of God is the greatest which ever dawned on the intelligence of man. But did it ever dawn upon the intelligence of man in such a way as other truths have done? When Peter made his great confession, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God*, our Lord answered him in joy and thankfulness, *Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonah; flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in*

heaven. May we not say that flesh and blood never revealed this truth of God's eternal Fatherhood? It is God's own direct, supreme revelation of Himself in Christ His eternal Son.

Perhaps there never was a false religion. There have been many imperfect ones. And that which marks off the religion of Christ from every other is this teaching of Fatherhood. It is unique in the history of man's troubled search for God. If we name the least imperfect of the ethnic faiths, if we name the highest of them, we shall find that Christianity quite infinitely transcends it, and does so by reason of its revelation of God's Fatherhood. It is the master-idea in the religion of Christ, that which is regulative of all the rest. It is the architectonic thought—and the whole plan of Christianity is the expression of it.

This thought is Christ's own. It is native and original with Him. In the world had been nothing like it before. Max Müller assures us that there is no religion which is sufficiently recorded to be understood, which does not in some sense or other apply the term "father" to its deity.

This may be true, but it must not mislead us as to the facts. The word is the same but the sense is different. Measureless distances lie between the conceptions represented by this official relation of the god to his worshippers and the true Fatherhood which Christ reveals. Homer speaks of Zeus as the father of gods and men. Aratus, in his fine hymn to Zeus quoted by the apostle when "he stood in the midst of the Areopagus" at Athens, exclaims, "Offspring of thine are we too, we and all that is mortal around us." The meaning of the term as employed in pagan myth and old-world religion is no more than that God is creator or ruler or both. They did not mean that Fatherhood represented God's character and disposition towards us—and that is what Jesus meant.

The greatest of the Old Testament writers never mounted so high as this thought of our Lord. Though they spoke of God as Father they did not know what Jesus knew and could not teach like Him. The relation was thought of in Israel as national. The people of Israel collectively were as a child, a son, of Jehovah,

because specially called and chosen by Him to be His peculiar people. At other times, by some of the purest spirits of Israel, God is spoken of as Father, in the sense that obedience and devotion are due to Him from His worshippers. And only at times, those times rare indeed, did a spiritual seer of Israel rise to the majesty of an intuition concerning the fatherly character of God. "Like as a father pitieth his children," sang one of the Psalmists, "so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him,"—*like* as a father, you observe; God is like a father! He did not dare assert that God is Father! And like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth, not all His children, but *them that fear Him.* But God *is* Father, said Jesus; and after this manner pray ye, *Our Father, who art in heaven.*

The first words of Jesus in His earthly life and His last breathe the Father's name. The child is sought by His parents and found in the temple, and He asks them, *Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?* Gethsemane lies behind; the agony of Calvary is ending; and the triumphant Sufferer with His last breath exclaims,

Father, into Thy hand I commend My spirit. Whenever the Saviour speaks to God He calls Him *Father.* He never calls Him by any other name. Five prayers of His are recorded in the New Testament. In each one God is addressed as *Father* and in no other way. In one prayer which is contained in three verses of Matthew's Gospel, *Father* occurs five times. In such terms He would have His disciples pray.

Attempts are freely made to narrow the range of Christ's great deliverance. We are asked to believe that only a favoured few are His children. He is not the Father of mankind. A legal fiction is invented, and we are told that through repentance and conversion a sinner may be adopted into the family of God. But He *is* our Father and we *are* His children. It is not by our own choice or act that we become members of the human family. It is not by our own choice or act that we become God's children. With that laboured passion for limiting the beneficence of God of which we have often cause to complain, the reactionary, faced by the unnumbered sentences in which Christ speaks of God's Father-

hood, tries to explain that truly God was the Father of Jesus, but that Jesus only speaks of God as "our" Father or "your" Father when He is speaking to His disciples. The forbidding soul asserts that Christ did not proclaim God's Fatherhood to any but the called and chosen, the penitent and saved. This is not true. It falsifies the very letter of Scripture. It was to the "multitude," and not to the disciples, that Jesus said, *Call no man your father on earth; for One is your Father who is in heaven.* While many times our Lord used the word in an absolute sense without limit or restriction—*the Father*, He calls Him, as to the Samaritan woman by Jacob's Well: *The hour cometh and now is when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.* We will set no bounds about this life-giving affirmation nor seek to limit what is infinitely wide.

It is not said that the cultured and the rich, the spiritual and the holy, are children of God. Now are we, all of us, God's children—untrained, wayward, disobedient, unfilial children, but children still—and it doth not yet appear what we

shall be! Here is a word for the prophets of the ethnic faiths, for Buddha and Zoroaster, for Confucius and Mohammed and for their followers: You are children of God! Here is a word for the heathen peoples, lost in ignorance and night: You are children of God! Here is the word which we are to speak to the degraded and the sinful amongst us, the word which is to awaken to life the sleeping glory of the undying soul: You, bruised and wounded and defiled, you are children of God! Here is the word which is to carry us victorious through our mortal strife with banners flying: Now are we children of God! And this is the word which will greet our ears when we hang our battered armour on the battlements of heaven: *This is My beloved son.* Let us hold to this great fact. It will revolutionize our conceptions of God and man, clarify our views of duty, and inspire every one of us with the desire for a noble life.

"Man never knows how anthropomorphic he may become." This was the favourite sentence of Matthew Arnold. To be anthropomorphic is to think of Deity in the terms of humanity, to

speak of God under figures which belong to man. And it is true. When we try to think of personality we begin to think of a person. When we try to think of Power and Will we begin to think of parts and passions. When we try to think of a Being who thinks and loves we begin to form a mental picture of one with a physical appearance like our own but greater, a glorified, non-natural Man seated upon His splendid throne. It is inevitable. How else are we, within the limits of human speech, to give tongue to our thought of Him? And how else, with such faculties as ours, are we to visualize Him so as to feel Him real? Instead of complaining that man never knows how anthropomorphic he may become, let us say, Man never knows how true his anthropomorphism is! He has yet to learn that the best that he can think of God is derived from what is likest God within his soul. Man is a revelation of God, the true Shekinah in which the glory of God is manifested upon this earth.

The master-thought of a religion is regulative of all the rest. With it all else must agree.

The architect with his plan, the dramatist or novelist with his plot, the thinker with his system of philosophy, has one central idea which gives form and life to building, drama, story, or synthesis. If in any of these there are found ideas, purposes, characters, deeds—any form of expression—which do not harmonize with the primal, dominating conception you have a clear case of bad workmanship, and, if the departure is sufficiently marked, the entire work is spoiled. In contemplation of the religion proclaimed by Christ the thought of bad workmanship is excluded. We must think of His perfect will as one with the perfect will of God. He was full of grace and truth. Whatever, therefore, we find in our reading of the religious life out of harmony with the controlling idea of the religion of Jesus, the idea of the Fatherhood of God, we must reject as foreign to the religion itself. It may be that we have misread the ancient documents. It may be that we have imported into the faith of Jesus from pagan or from worldly sources that which Jesus would not own. It may even be that those who were nearest to Him and who

have written Gospels and Epistles concerning Him were so greatly inferior to Him that they could not completely understand Him nor perfectly report His words. It is better for us to fall back upon one or other of these explanations or upon one similar than to think of the faith of Christ as a meaningless and muddled scheme of things, without a plan, starting from no point and reaching none. The mind of Jesus was harmonious with itself, and if the Fatherhood of God was the leading and commanding thought in the religion He taught every constituent element of that religion must be controlled by it. Our ideas which are inconsistent with it must be modified accordingly.

This will carry us far. Doctrines, where we are in doubt, must be determined by the fact of Fatherhood. Doctrines which seem to conflict either with our own moral sense or with the general thought of religion must be brought to the bar of this master-truth, and if by it they are condemned, from such a judgment there can be no appeal.

Thus: Times there have been when the

Church could teach that God, acting solely upon His own caprice—it used to be said of His own grace—could and did call and predestine one person to everlasting bliss and another to endless woe; and it was satirized by Burns in the famous lines:

> "O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
> Wha, as it pleases best Thysel',
> Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
> A' for Thy glory,
> And no for onie guid or ill
> They've done afore Thee!"

We have only to try that doctrine, and not necessarily a caricature of it, by this test of Fatherhood, and it shrinks shamefacedly out of court. Does Fatherhood act in fashion so revolting? No. Then neither does Deity. "But we read it in the Scriptures!" Then you must have read the Scriptures wrongly. Which is more likely, that you should misunderstand the utterances of an oriental people given to figure of speech and rhetoric different from your own, preserved through changes of language and intellectual climate, through the vicissitudes of

nineteen hundred years, or that the whole thought of our Lord should be reduced to chaos?

There have been times when the Church could hold and teach that on a sentence pronounced at death and irreversible even by the great God who had decreed it, man or woman or child would be doomed to a never-ending hell of conscious torment. Not that only: it was even declared that such a doom did not follow simply upon deliberate guilt. It was the fate of all of Adam's race, the consequence of his transgression six thousand years ago, and the doom was just. And again the answer is: Try the doctrine by this test of Fatherhood. Man, take your child in your arms and lift him above your head until the blood of your warm heart flushes your face with the effort and the little one sings to the ceiling in his joy. Mother, with your baby on your knees and all heaven looking up at you from his eyes, give your imagination play. And what do you think of such doctrines now? If you read of the wrath of God you must ask yourself what is the pain and displeasure which a noble father feels in the presence of grievous

offenses, what his attitude would be, how he would feel and how he would be likely to act, utterly abhorring the wrong and devotedly loving the wayward or wicked child—and you will not go far astray in interpreting the meaning of the word. And if you are puzzled by high-sounding and cumbrous phrases about "faith" and "works," about "justification by faith" and "conditions of sanctification" and the like unendurable things, you have but to consider the terms on which perfect and perfectly blissful relations are possible between you and your children—love, trust, and simple goodness—and you know all that all the theologies can teach you. The master-thought of Christ's teaching will be your tutor to bring you to God.

Let us accept this truth as the test by which all the moral problems of God's government of the world are at last to be resolved. It is futile to deny that those problems are many and grave. Against them men and women have been bruising their brains for twice two thousand years. What we call the problem of pain and the mystery of evil have plunged many minds into

atheism and many souls into despair. There is no reason for the atheism and no cause for the despair. There are explanations of many of the puzzles which have been thought most baffling, explanations which call for thought and care and skill but which are yet capable of being grasped by ordinary intellects when the clue has been supplied. Yet for many the puzzle and the bafflement remain, and the minds of men will continue to ask, How can these things be under the rule of an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving God?

The perplexity becomes dumb inarticulate pain when we ourselves are the victims of what seems to us the injustice of life. "This is my complaint," said the Psalmist, "that the hand of the Lord doth change"—is not equal, that is to say, is not impartial, infallibly just. And this is often our complaint: sickness, affliction, disappointment, defeat, death, they come without reason, undeserved, unprovoked, and who can help but murmur at his fate? If only we could be persuaded to set every universal moral problem and every personal pain and sorrow in the light of

this thought of the Fatherhood of God. Let us admit for the moment that the "why" and "wherefore" of it are beyond finding out. Let us admit that the way is dark and that no ray of light from reason falls upon our troubled path. Let us admit that it is at present beyond, hopelessly beyond, the capacity of mortal to discern good reason for our suffering—and even then let us try to believe that the word *Father* describes God's essential, indestructible character and His unbroken, unchanging attitude to us. There must be a reason for it all. Sorrow cometh not from the ground. He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. Though He cause pain yet will He have mercy upon us according to the multitude of His compassions. Though for a moment He hide His face from us, yet with everlasting kindness will He hold us in His remembrance. Though weeping comes, he comes only as a traveller to lodge at night: joy cometh to dwell in the morning. If you know the meaning of fatherhood, and if you know your own heart towards your child, you know the thoughts that God thinks towards you,

thoughts of good and not of evil, and you may yet attain unto that cheerful faith to which at the last come the rhapsodies of saints and the visions of sages, *Your Father knoweth.*

Well, now, let us see how this truth if it once grips us, and if we understand that it is and must be determinative of all our theories of life, will affect our views of human relations.

God is the Father of us all. He is our Father. He cares for us. But He is no more our Father than He is the Father of our friend or our foe. He cares not any more for us than for His children of other name and race. He is the Father of all His children, and all are the children of His love. He has made of one blood all races of mankind to dwell together and to seek after Him, though indeed He is not very far from any one of us! Do you believe any part of this? Should you believe it if you made a trip to Chinatown? Should you believe it somewhere in the Black Belt? "The only good Indian is a dead Indian"—how often have you said that? And one does not dare ask an Englishman who has been in the Far East how often he has referred

to a cultivated person of another race as a "nigger" with an offensive adjective to describe him! A few grains of pigment more or less showing in the white of the eye or in the finger nails—and where is our doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man? Contempt of colour is blasphemy against God—let us be sure of that. And when the practical difficulty presents itself, the problem of statesmanship, of law, or of citizenship, let us bear in mind that we are not left in a wild welter of a world without guidance or definitive rule. We have to set the problem in the light of Christ's teaching of God's Fatherhood, and see if it becomes simpler then!

The South often tells us that we do not understand the Negro question. The South says this to the intelligent people of the North, and, of course, much more vigorously and with better ground of reason to men of British blood. It may be true. Perhaps the North does not understand the Negro problem. Is it certain that the South does? Let us take the Southern ground: "The North does not understand the

Negro question," and then ask, "Should we not both come nearer to understanding if we started where Jesus Christ starts, with the postulate that God is our Father and that we all are brethren?"

The cynic will tell us that the theory does not work out right in practice. Has it been tried? He will say that the "Am I not a man and a brother" business has been worked to death. But are the cynic's code of law and system of morals your own? For if the mind that was in Jesus be not in you, how are you one of His?

It is not pretended that the recognition of God's Fatherhood will end every difficulty. It is not suggested that you can stop there. This is only a plea that you will begin there! Let us admit that these others are, equally with ourselves, God's children, and so our brothers and our sisters. That is not to say that they may not still have to be regarded as children whose education has been neglected and who have suffered a thousand disadvantages of race and station. They may not know as well how to behave themselves in their Father's house. They may not have reached a stage of self-conscious devel-

opment in which they can be entrusted with all the privileges which belong to those who have longer seen the light of day. It does not follow that because such a one is your brother that you must entrust to him all the powers which you are called upon to wield. Perhaps, just because he is your brother, you will be affectionately anxious not to put that in his hands with which he may hurt himself and other people. That may be good for the son just graduated from the university which would not be good for the child entering the kindergarten. But the point is that if the Negro or the Chinaman or the ignorant immigrant or the representative of any backward race is indeed your brother, then the spirit with which you will treat him will be a brotherly spirit. It will not be one of contempt. It will not be one of hostility. It will not be a spirit of supercilious disdain. It will be the kind, considerate, anxious, yearning spirit of one who desires to see the Father's children rise to the level of their birthright and the possibilities of their destiny. Is this plain? One of the great men of this country, when asked if he regarded the Negro

problem as insoluble, replied: "You must remember they are American citizens." And in the presence of the open Bible and in the realized presence of Christ, must we not say of this same problem and of the same people: You must remember that they, like you, are the children of God?

Now consider how this truth of God's Fatherhood will affect some other views of ours. God is the Father of all virtuous and lovely souls. He is equally the Father of the sinful and the vicious. He was the Father of the exemplary, dutiful, industrious son who stayed at home and worked. He was not less the Father of the prodigal who wandered into a far country, spent his substance in riotous living, and began to be in want. "If you are not good God will not love you," a parent sometimes says to a child. But He will! He cannot help it. You do not cease to love your little one because of his mistakes and shortcomings. You smile and are sorry together! But the love is there. God may have to punish—but that need not be unloving. His strokes may be mercy, His chastise-

ment grace. He cannot possibly treat all alike, the dutiful and the undutiful, the filial and the rebellious. He may have to leave the unfilial and undutiful alone, to taste of the fruit of his going, and see what results from his sin. In a word, God may have to deal with a sinning child of His as the noblest and purest earthly parent might with his prodigal son or daughter who would not come home. Yet God is still the Father, and God is love.

For this fact of Fatherhood is indestructible. On that we must insist. In the nature of the case it is indestructible. Fatherhood is not a contract. It is one of the inevitabilities of life. If I am already, here and now, your son, how can you make it otherwise? I may be unworthy of you. You may desire to disown me. But the fact of your fatherhood is one of the facts of the universe. And to many of us it is inconceivable that God should ever want to destroy such a fact. Suppose your son is so unworthy, and you so righteously grieved and pained and angry with him. Suppose he came to himself, with tears and shame and through a cleansing

baptism of repentance sought his way back to your heart. Suppose you, with divine insight, saw that his repentance was sincere and that he longed with a great longing for your moral help and uplift in his toilsome, agonizing struggle backward to the forgotten good and forward to the light of day. It is only barely conceivable that you would turn a deaf ear to all his petitions and prayers. And if you did, if you could still remain obdurate, angry, whatever good cause for anger he had given you in his years of sin, one can only say that you would fail to realize the noblest type of forgiving love. But when it is a question of God's love and of His eternal Fatherhood, it is for ever and for ever impossible to conceive of a time when, if the prodigal wishes to return to his Father, the Father will refuse to receive him. We may trust death and if need be hell itself to demonstrate the Father's love.

Then what shall we say to the undutiful and the sinful? What is that but to ask, What shall we say to ourselves? Have we not all sinned and come short of the privilege of sonship and

daughterhood? But is there that to arouse the conscience more vital and piercing than this reproach: You are sinning against God's everlasting love: you are wounding the Father's heart? And where shall we find such a matchless plea and mighty inspiration: You are God's children: God loves you: God, your Father, desires His children to be worthy of their parentage and like Himself! Goodness is natural to us since we are the Father's children, and we must follow the strain in our blood and our spirit's predestined aim. Now, if we have reason to feel our shortcomings, our incompleteness, our sins, let us seek once more power from on high that we may be the dutiful, loving children we ought to be. Let us turn away from self-seeking, passion, or the mere emptiness and frivolity of life, and walk in the dignity of the children of God, breathing only as prayer and as vow of consecration the word which Jesus taught: *Our Father.*

II

Hallowed Be Thy Name

A Creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;
But this thing is of God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and
live out thy life as the light.

—*Swinburne.*

II

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

THE first and most obvious reflection is that we ought to guard against any tendency to drift into a flippant use of the name of God. Irreverence, we may admit, is of the heart and not of the lips; and Carlyle is probably right when he speaks of people who only swear from the teeth outwards. Yet it is eminently desirable that those who in solemn gladness have professed themselves the followers of Christ should refrain from any use of the divine names inconsistent with the profound reverence of the heart. It is easy to argue that the Jew carried his veneration of the sacred name too far, and made a fetich of it. The time came when he would not so much as speak the name of God—the personal, covenant name of *Yahwey*. So he substituted for it the lower word, *Adonai*, Lord. Later, the name was written with the consonants of the word *Yahwey* and the vowels

of the word *Adonai*. And some time very late in history, probably about the time of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, the word *Jehovah* was evolved from this hybrid spelling. The history is curious, and if it brings singular suggestions to those who have learned to love the modern, manufactured word *Jehovah*, it should also force upon our minds the conviction that such reverence, exaggerated as it was, rebukes the levity with which at times we permit ourselves to toss to and fro the name or names of Deity. "Od's blood" is an old English exclamation which you must have seen many times in historic fiction; "zounds" is still better known. "Od's blood" is a corruption of "God's blood" and "zounds" of "God's wounds." And if these phrases are no longer on our lips, others are which, while often meaningless, are out of place in Christian speech. If they do not betray a real and recognized irreverence, they manifest at least a want of thoughtful and purposed reverence. They do not reflect the spirit of our prayer: "Hallowed be Thy name."

But this does not carry us very far. What do

we mean by the prayer, *Hallowed be Thy name?* Nay, it would be safer to ask, "Do we mean anything at all?" For it is probable that the phrase is only a phrase to us, and that beyond the obvious reflection with which we have just started out we find little instruction, edification, or inspiration in the prayer we pray so easily.

With us, in our ordinary life, names are nothing worth. They are a mere social convenience. In civilized life we are bound to wear a mark of identification of some kind. Even in a great convict establishment, where only figures distinguish one prisoner from another, the unhappy man finds an added humiliation in being reduced from a name to a number. There is some warmth and colour in our own names, and they add a little picturesqueness to social life. There is even much history in them, though of this we seldom think. Many of them are red-veined with the life of the centuries, and rich with quaint or hallowed memories. But all the same, they have no essential meaning for us. They do not describe the person whom they indicate. They tell nothing of his character and power. They

do not stand for personality. A man may be called Hunter though he has never seen an animal wilder than those in the park nor looked at a gun except in the museum. He may be called Baker though he knows nothing of bread except that he eats it. Mary, notwithstanding her Hebrew name, is not always bitter, and John is sometimes quite other than a visible embodiment of the grace of God.

Not so with the Hebrew treatment of names and with the usages of yet more primitive peoples. There exist traces of an ancient and widespread superstition that one who knew the name of another possessed some kind of power over him. Hence the reluctance to tell the name except to those whose good faith was assured. Between the name and the personality a close connection was supposed to exist. The name almost possessed an entity of its own. It was, if not a living thing, at least an essential part of the personality. A name stood, in Old Testament life, for the sum total of the characteristics and attributes of the person who bore it. Abraham is the "friend of God" and Jacob is "the sup-

planter." While the word used in an absolute sense—"the name of"—means nothing less than the all of which we think when the person is named. The divine names were thus invested with a peculiar sacredness. And the phrase "the name of God" is frequently employed to mean the majesty, the authority, the personality, and the revealed character of God.

Illustrations of this from the Old Testament will readily occur to you. We read in Proverbs, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and are safe." Now what are you to make of such imagery? How can a name be a tower? How can you run into it? And how can you be safe there? We do not suppose that the person of spiritual vision who shaped this proverb for us imagined that in the consonants and vowels which formed the name-words, some thaumaturgic, wonder-working power was to be found! Is it a mixed metaphor? How, we ask again, can a name be a Tower of Refuge? Quite easily and certainly, as all the ages tell, if you see that by "the name of God" the Hebrew meant God Himself. In the power,

the holiness, and the love of God the man who reverently seeks it finds protection and rest.

In like manner the prophet Zechariah promises that they who will trust in the Lord and do right shall be strengthened in the Lord and shall walk up and down in His name. You do not need to ask, How can a human being walk up and down in a name? You have seen enough of the Biblical manner of expression to understand that security is to be enjoyed by those who will place their reliance in the strength and goodness of God.

In this way our Lord speaks of "the name of God" here and elsewhere. When He says, *I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me; I have declared unto them Thy name*, He asserts that He has made known the unique, life-giving revelation of the Father's will and the Father's love which He lived and died to give us. He has shown what God is and what is His attitude to us. When He prays, *Father, glorify Thy name*, He is asking that the attributes of holiness and love which He has revealed as characteristic of His Father and ours

should be recognized and honoured throughout all the world and all the ages, and that the human race should be won to worship and glad obedience. And when He prays and teaches us to pray, *Hallowed be Thy name*, He desires and He wishes us to desire that the divine quality of Fatherhood which He has just made the initial and determinative idea of the prayer may indeed be "hallowed." May the Father-God of whom Jesus spoke become the one object of worship amongst all mankind! And may we His worshippers conserve and sanctify that revelation of His character! *Our Father, hallowed be Thy name*—the name and the fact of Fatherhood!

Let us see what is involved in this prayer.

There is something very wonderful in the profound reverence which distinguishes the man of science. For many of us there is rebuke in it. We measure ourselves against him and stand condemned. There is a nobility in the scientific spirit before which we bow. There is inspiration in the contemplation of the motive-passion by which the high priests of science have been urged to their work and sustained in it. Their

sense of awe moves us profoundly. This is true not only of those who have consciously avowed themselves religious. Their devotion is beautiful and illuminating. "O God, I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee," exclaimed Kepler in his joy, as his telescope swept the heavens. "I bowed my head and worshipped," said Linnæus, as he bent over his flower, "I saw God in His glory pass by." "Science," says Lord Kelvin, "positively affirms creating and directing power, which it compels us to accept as an article of belief." Yet these are not the only manifestations of devoutness. We look at the work of the nature-searcher who has never thought of himself as a follower of Christ and who might be ready to deny that he should be called a Christian at all. We think of his lifelong devotion to fact and his indescribable adoration of truth. He will not falsify the record for a house full of silver and gold. He is sworn interpreter in the High Court of Nature, and he will see the heavens fall and this solid earth go reeling back to chaos before he will overstate or understate or wrongly state the evidence which the micro-

scope or the test tube has submitted to him. Why should he be so precise in evaluation of each petty incident of analysis or so laborious and so tremblingly modest in the elaboration of his synthesis? What is fact, after all? As Pilate asked in his world-worn heart, "What is truth?" And why should the man of science be so guarded in his answer? It is splendid, and we who are worshippers of the God of truth ought to recognize with deep thanksgiving the reverence of the scientific mind.

Now, there is something in this to suggest to us a reverence for the name of God which will make better and braver men and women of us. If the man of science feels this awe in the presence of an ascertained fact, and if he feels that he is coerced by an abstract something which for want of a better word he calls Truth, so that he cannot—not merely will not—make his judgment blind—how much more shall we profoundly venerate the revelation of God made to our hearts by Jesus Christ! With what immovable fidelity shall we pursue to its remotest implication the doctrine of God's Fatherhood which

Jesus taught! With what reverence will we safeguard the doctrine itself from attack; with what courage and devotion will we labour to secure its adoption as a working principle of life over all the earth!

That which we eloquently expound as doctrine we will valiantly defend as fact! If God is our Father, and we all are brethren, then in the great crises of the nations and in the routine of our days we will abide by no lower standard of life. Nothing will ever extenuate the guilt of the Church in its servile acquiescence in war and its yet more ungodly glorification of the war-spirit. It is not the fighter who stands condemned beyond all others; it is the professed followers of Him they called the Prince of Peace who kept themselves safe and clamoured for war. In a famous speech defending the American Colonies in the War of Independence, Edmund Burke exclaimed:

"The poorest being that crawls on earth, contending to save itself from injustice, is an object respectable in the eyes of God and man. But I cannot conceive any existence under heaven that

is more truly odious and disgusting than an impotent, helpless creature, without civil wisdom or military skill, bloated with pride and arrogance, calling for battles which he is not to fight, and contending for a violent dominion which he can never exercise."

And in war time such spectacles, "odious and disgusting," in Burke's strong phrase, are presented to us from day to day that the words of a British preacher known on both sides of the Atlantic remain unexaggerated truth:

"That which breaks the heart of the peace angel is not so much the corporal undoing of the stricken field as the brutality of the man in the street, the cowardly swagger of the music hall, the degradation of the pulpit to the service of a heathen deity, the blood-lust fostered by theatres, inculcated in schools, preached in churches, propagated by our women, professed by our children, practiced by all."

This is no time of war. If it were you yourselves might begin to denounce the preaching of peace as cowardly, criminal, and unpatriotic. In reason and quietness you are ready to confess

that nothing less is consistent with our doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Then let us call our social sins into the light of day and condemn them in our own personal practice and in the civilization of which we form a part. You shall not glory in a social order in which the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong; in which men fight for their own hand without ruth or pity, reckless of the cries of the wounded and the groans of the dying, marching to their desired goal over the prostrate bodies of friends betrayed and rivals trampled down. You shall not selfishly seek your own, work for your own, fight for your own, claim your own and enjoy it, while men and women for whom Christ died are trodden down into the ooze and mire of the streets and their children are eaten as though they were bread. You shall not take your ease and be happy while preventable disease is not prevented, while ignorance takes its daily toll of human life, while the saloon and the race-track poison the life-blood of the community, and greed and rapacity, con-

trolling the machinery of political life, corrupt the very sources of national well-being. These things you shall not do nor suffer to be done, because they are a repudiation of the divine Fatherhood and a denial of human brotherhood. And as is the man of science with his profound and awful reverence for fact and the truth of things, so shall you be with the sensitive chivalry which feels a stain upon your knightly honour as though it were a raw and gaping wound. You shall not be able to bear the thought that such things as these are done to and by your Father's children in any corner of your Father's world. At home, in your city streets, in the halls of justice and legislation, in your schools, factories, exchanges, banks, and in the daily toil by which you live, you shall wrong no member of the great brotherhood of humanity nor see him wronged, and you shall order your public and your private life by the royal law of love. And where you cannot be in person, where you think you cannot be in effective influence, where torture is endured to agony and blood flows in rivers in the Ghettos of Russian cities, amongst the cocoa slaves under

the burning blue of the equator, the rubber victims in the sinister forests of the Upper Congo, and in the dark places of the earth where the cry of helpless humanity is never silent, there shall you be in sympathy and spirit, in the measureless potentiality of your prayers, and the undreamed-of power of your compassionate love. Give none of this, and your prayer, *Hallowed be Thy name*, becomes a hollow mockery. Give all of this to which the soul can reach, and your all-embracing prayer becomes a prophecy of dawn: *Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name!*

There are two ways in which we can help to answer our own prayer and hallow the name of God.

One is the acceptance of those deep and tender views of the character of God which are sometimes condemned as a modern Gospel which is not a Gospel, but which are really intrinsic and essential in the mind of Christ. And if we do accept them, it must be frankly and with gladness. Of the modern critical study of the Bible, Dr. William Newton Clarke, the most distin-

guished theologian on this continent, a man who has wedded the broadest thought to the most beautiful piety, has just written :

" Certain general large results, and many more special ones may fairly be said to have been established to remain. At the present day, therefore, it is both my duty and my privilege to accept such conclusions. I shall be wilfully mistaken if I refuse. And if I accept them I am not to accept them on the sly and shamefacedly, but freely and frankly, like an honest man ; and when they have been accepted I am not to lay them on the shelf, as if by mere mental assent I had fulfilled my duty to them. I must live up to my acceptance. I must take them into daily use in my own understanding and presentation of the Bible. I must manfully move with the movement of truth. I have sympathy with the man who said, ' If it is heresy to think ahead of one's time, is it not heresy to think behind one's time ? ' "

It should be the ambition of the Church of our day to maintain a pulpit which is never once guilty of the heresy of thinking behind the time.

The minister of Christ must refuse to believe that God is a God of the Dead. He must proclaim the living truths which he has learned from a Living God. President Faunce, in his noble volume, "The Educational Ideal in the Ministry," refers to Kipling's story entitled "The Man Who Was," and declares that there are "sincerely devout men who seem to believe in a God who was!" And he exclaims with indignation: "Such an idea is the master-falsehood of humanity. It is the one fundamental untruth which will put unreality into every sermon and impiety into every prayer. Our God was and is and is to come!" Let the men and women whose ears are open to His speech glory in sustaining in every city of our land a Church of commanding name and position to which devout persons of every name and denomination and creed may come with the certainty that they will hear preached, with whatsoever of human infirmity and incompleteness, a theology which does no violence to modern culture, a philosophy which reverences alike literature and science, a Gospel which is as deep as all human need and as wide as the love of God.

Such a Church and such a pulpit the world needs to-day. And by such churchmanship shall all good men and good women everywhere seek to realize their own prayer: *Hallowed be Thy name.*

When the great Scotch Church case was being tried in the English Courts of Justice, the editor of the *British Weekly* said that the early teachers of the Scotch Free Church were "fiercely orthodox." He testified that when prophets of their day arose and pleaded for a revision of the cast-iron standards of that Church they were "hunted like mad dogs"—the phrase is his own. They were hunted like mad dogs, indeed! But it is not permitted to Christian people to hunt their prophets like mad dogs! In the providence of God it has been ordained that with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again. And God is not mocked. When men cry against one sent from God, "Crucify him," they are apt to find that the blood which they spill falls in scalding streams upon their heads and upon those of their children in days to come. "Fierce orthodoxy" is all very well, but it is a game that

two can play at. The altar-cloth of one age is the door-mat of the next. When you try to run the new wine into the old skins, the skins burst and the wine is lost. Perhaps it is new wine-skins that we are to seek to-day. When the light from heaven falls upon our path to-day shall we not have grace and courage to walk therein? It was the Most High God who led our fathers by a way they knew not.

"Yet think not unto them was lent
All light for all the coming days,
And heaven's eternal wisdom spent
In making straight the ancient ways.

"The living fountain overflows
For every flock, for every lamb,
Nor heeds, though angry creeds oppose
With Luther's dyke and Calvin's dam."

Believe in change. We may grow old, old in spirit with which years have nothing to do, but new ideas will be born of God's love for men, and our children will receive them. Believe in change. Believe that it is God's will and way, the will and way of the God who renews Himself

from day to day lest one good custom should corrupt the world. Believe that your fears are themselves dangerous and dishonouring—dangerous to your own usefulness, dishonouring to the God you worship. If the name of God stands for the attributes of God, if Jesus sums up the totality of God's nature in the name by which He names Him, *Our Father*, and if in the light of God's eternal Fatherhood the creeds of the dark ages stand condemned, then, *Hallowed be Thy name!*

And the other way in which we can seek to answer our own prayer is that of a purer, fuller, saintlier life. Improved creeds are good, but improved characters are better. The humane preacher of an inhuman Gospel is often told that he is better than his creed. It will be sin and shame to us who profess the divinest Gospel which has yet been made known to the children of earth if our contemporaries and posterity have to record of us in censure or pity that we were worse than our creed. The world's righteous contempt for moral treachery breathes in Browning's passionate line,—

"Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed!
Who maintain Thee in word and defy Thee in deed."

Brethren, let us love, for love is of God, and God is love. Let us count the day ill spent in which we have not made somebody happy. Let us sow smiles and not tears. Passing through the valley of weeping we will make it a place of springs. With simpleness and gentleness and honour and clean mirth let us make the little world which feels our influence a brighter spot. Let our homes be sacred, the place of peace. Let our Church be holy. Let the men and women who know us know God better for their knowledge of us. And the Christ who is our life, may He be so evidently manifested in our life that generations shall rise up to echo our far-reaching prayer: *Hallowed be Thy name!*

III

Thy Kingdom Come

Father, let Thy kingdom come,—
Let it come with living power;
Speak at length the final word,
Usher in the triumph hour.

As it came in days of old,
In the deepest hearts of men,
When Thy martyrs died for Thee,
Let it come, O God, again.

Tyrant thrones and idol shrines,
Let them from their place be hurled:
Enter on Thy better reign,—
Wear the crown of this poor world.

Oh, what long, sad years have gone,
Since Thy Church was taught this prayer!
Oh, what eyes have watched and wept
For the dawning everywhere!

Break, triumphant day of God!
Break at last, our hearts to cheer;
Throbbing souls and holy songs
Wait to hail Thy dawning here.

Empires, temples, sceptres, thrones,—
May they all for God be won!
And, in every human heart,
Father, let Thy kingdom come.

—*John Page Hopps.*

III

THY KINGDOM COME

WE are not greatly concerned with the question as to the meaning which the Jews attached to the phrase, "The Kingdom of Heaven" or "The Kingdom of God." It is quite certain that, whatever the Jews meant by the phrase, our Lord meant something different. He preached, and did many mighty works, and loved, and went about doing good—and they sent Him to the cross. What did Jesus mean? How did He think of the kingdom? And is there in our hearts any such desire, corresponding to the longing in the Saviour's breast, that we should fervently pray, *Thy kingdom come?*

"Kingdom of God"—"Kingdom of Heaven"—both phrases appear in the New Testament. Which did our Lord use? And what is the difference between them? It is of no consequence. Probably Jesus used either phrase as occasion

served. Each is thrown out at a vast idea, too vast for any form of speech to cover it; and it is futile to seek in the form of words essential difference of thought. Does either phrase, do both, convey a meaning to you? Do you pray for the coming of the kingdom upon earth? And if you do, what is it you desire when you pray?

Jesus meant the reign of love and goodness in human hearts. Less than this He would not mean and more He could not. We must clear our minds of fantastic and artificial notions about the kingdom, together with the high-sounding words which have imposed them upon the bewildered minds of people—"theocratic," "eschatological," and the like dreadful things. We must refuse to think of a state within a state, or of a kingdom absorbing kingdoms, or of an overturning of human rule by the descent of legions of angels and the establishment of such a system of law and administration of law as never was on sea or land. We are to clear our minds of the idea that the Kingdom *of* Heaven is to be *in* heaven, or anywhere else than in our homes, our cities, and our world. And we must relegate

to the limbo of dreams the idea that the kingdom has to be ushered in by a spectacular judgment day, a dramatic assize, a celestial jury, and a glorified Christ throned and crowned as judge and king forevermore. The Kingdom of God is the kingdom of good, the kingdom of goodness, and it is found wherever men and women live in love of God and one another. It is called the Kingdom of Heaven by way of contrast to the selfishness, strife, and sin of earth. It is high, exalted. It is ideal, glorious. Where love is, there God is also. And the Kingdom of God has its loyal subjects where men and women live in righteousness, love, and peace. In a word, when we pray this prayer we seek the universal reign of righteousness. The Kingdom of Heaven includes all good men and women everywhere. And our prayer is that the object of Christ's life and death may be secured over all the earth—He came to make us good.

Everything then that tends in this direction is comprehended in the Christian scheme. And you have at once a conclusive standard of appeal and an unfailing inspiration.

First you have a test by which to determine the character, good or bad, of an act, a movement, or an institution. Does it make for the Kingdom of Heaven? That is to say, does it tend to increase the sum total of human goodness, peace, and love? This sweeps away at a stroke the mass of artificial distinctions and discriminations which casuists, trained and untrained, Protestant and Catholic, in all the Churches have been so fond of multiplying. The distinction between secular and sacred has always been unintelligible to the candid mind. *Punch* many years ago, when *Punch* was wise and witty, satirized these artificialities. The cartoon showed the fond mother and the terrible child. He was engaged in a tussle with the sofa cushion. The clergyman's wife had called. It was Sunday afternoon, and the mother had to explain that as it was Sunday Tommy could not have his toys and so she had given him the sofa cushion to play with. Multitudes of people in every country and in every walk of life have found the toys secular but for some mysterious reason the sofa cushion sacred. Some of you are old

enough to remember when a piano was secular but a harmonium sacred; when a violin was secular—and still more terribly secular when it was called a fiddle—while "David's harp of sacred sound" was all but divine. We have drawn distinctions between sacred music and secular, and, what is worse, between sacred and secular actions in human life. These distinctions have not helped. They were not sufficiently clear cut. They did not mark off essential differences. They only contrived to establish conventional distinctions for which ground in the reason and nature of things could not readily be discovered. The conception of the Kingdom of Heaven gives us a real standard, easily understood, which everybody can apply and apply universally. Does this make for the Kingdom of Heaven as we have just defined the Kingdom of Heaven? Or does it not? That is the unfailing test.

You may take illustrations that seem to you very small. Unless you establish such a standard they may even seem to you trivial. Or you may take illustrations of world-wide significance. The

rule will not break down. Good women at Christmas time send broadcast through this city appeals to the women of New York not to leave their Christmas shopping until the latest day and the latest hour. They address themselves to the clergy of the city and seek their sympathetic co-operation. They would have us appeal to you all and notably to women to have some consideration for the masses of people who serve your needs. What has this to do with the prayer, *Thy kingdom come?* Much—for all of us. Overwork, strain, exhaustion of body and brain and nerve and spirit, exasperation of soul, discontent, physical injuries, perhaps, inflicted upon weak, underfed, ill-nourished constitutions —physical injuries which may lap over to the next generation—these are involved in your lack of thought for those upon whom the Christmas season imposes its tremendous burdens. Measure your considerateness on the one hand, or your callous indifference on the other, by this one test. The Kingdom of Heaven, we say again and again, is goodness, love, peace. Now pray in your heart of hearts and mean your prayer,

Thy kingdom come—and the appeal of these good women will not fail.

The newspapers of late have been full of stories of experiments made in the direction of painless surgery. Ours is an age in which our own bodies fascinate us, and we are all of us interested in matters of health and disease, of medicine and surgery; and our minds have turned again to the discoveries and achievements of the science of healing in our time. We have looked with gratitude and with pride upon the outpouring of wealth for medical research, for hospitals, and for the daily, hourly conflict with disease which the world is waging. Is this secular or sacred? Is it sacred to preach a sermon and secular to cure diphtheria? Is it sacred to give a dollar to the foreign missionary society and secular to give a million to the crusade against tuberculosis or some other form of human suffering? The distinctions are ridiculous; the question is absurd. Is this really a strife against human sufferings? Are these efforts, researches, gifts, all this consecration of wealth and skill and thought, really making for

human happiness and the good of the human race? Then we know where we stand, and our prayer has vital meaning: *Thy kingdom come.*

Nobody denies that the prayer-meeting is sacred. But why should we think the political meeting secular? The work of the Church we have always held to be sacred. Is not the rule of the city and the government of the nation sacred, too? Is it sacred to sing hymns and secular to see that righteous men are set to administer righteous laws? Is it sacred to read the Sermon on the Mount and even to repeat every one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, and at the same time to stand by and allow the white slave traffic with its festering corruption to flourish in the great cities of the land? William Penn taught in his time that a Christian man should make it part of his religion to see that his country is well governed. Does your political work look in the direction of the Kingdom of Heaven? Does it tend to set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth? Or if the earth is too wide a field for you to contemplate, does it tend to make more good men and good women in your city and in

your state? Does it make it easier for people to do right and more difficult for them to do wrong? These are practical questions. These are living issues. And they have a thousand times more vitality and meaning than the old, bewildering distinction between secular and sacred.

It is not wasting time to insist on the need of clearer and better definitions. Let us return to an illustration already used, the question of music, secular or sacred. The artist would tell you that no such distinction exists. There may be good music and bad music; sacred and secular there cannot be. But consider. There is music which elevates and sublimes the soul; there is music which soothes and heals—and music which has no such effect on any living human being. There is music which brings thoughts and feelings vague and vast, thoughts and feelings which reach out towards the Infinite, which prepares the mind for wonder and worship and leads one near to God. Such music is, whatever the phrases we choose, devotional in its character. That is to say, it subdues the mind to quietness and obedience or exalts the soul to

enthusiasm and consecration. No need to ask of such music: Is it secular or sacred? It makes for the Kingdom of Heaven. Well, apply this test to many of the things you use and the practices in which you indulge, the newspapers you read, the magazines, the novels, the plays to which you go and the opera, and your amusements generally. It is no longer possible to draw a straight line down the middle and put on the right hand things that are sacred and on the left hand things that are secular. But what is the tendency of these? Do they make for the Kingdom of Heaven? Do they tend to establish the reign of goodness and of love in human hearts? The newspaper is a necessity of civilized life. Few people would care to live without it. The world would be a sad place without a novel in it. The histrionic instinct is one of the root instincts of our nature. The demand for amusement is as fundamental as the necessity for food and drink. But food may be adulterated and drink may be poisoned, the press may corrupt, novels may debauch, and the theatre demoralize. If you sit in your own library and reach out your

hand to any one of the four book-lined walls which surround you, you know that you may touch the mind of a teacher and the heart of a prophet, or, on the other hand, one of the enemies of the human race. It is the same with your common pursuits, with the amusements you choose, and the plays that are offered from a hundred theatres. England has a censor of plays, and a most ludicrous spectacle he is. Mediæval courts have had a curious functionary called the Keeper of the King's Conscience. There can be no censor of your amusements and pleasures other than the one which your own judgment and conscience admit, and that conscience is in your own keeping. Do these things make for the Kingdom of Heaven? Are they making a better man or woman of you, or a worse? Are you more sensitive to spiritual impressions because of this book you have just read or this play you have just seen? Has the play inclined you to cynical views of life, to a callous disregard of human suffering? Has it even won from you a laugh at things that in the Church and in your silent prayers you know should be

treated with reverence? Or has it brought you into a happy content with the sweetness and gentleness and goodness of life? Has it made you feel at peace with yourself and with the world? Has it shown you how awful goodness is and how hateful are selfishness and cruelty? You will answer all these questions without answering them at all if you pray with the heart and with the understanding also: *Thy kingdom come.*

Some things in life are intrinsically good, though good things may be perverted to evil uses. Some things are intrinsically bad, and it seems as though nothing in the world could make them good. But the overwhelming majority of things with which we have to deal are in themselves neither good nor bad. They are morally indifferent. All turns upon the spirit in which we deal with them. We are not to lose sight of this question of secularity and sacredness. But secularity and sacredness are in the spirit and not in the thing. One man may come to the Lord's Table in a spirit so narrow, so hard, so formal, so undevout as to make his pres-

ence there the most secular thing in the week for him. Another may come to a political meeting and take part in a contested election in the very spirit of Him who died upon a cross. His citizenship is to him as sacred as patriotism to Abraham Lincoln or liberty to George Washington. By what spirit are you moved? The prayer for the coming of God's kingdom on earth should supply the answer. If it is true and deep, if you long with a great longing to see goodness and love and peace extend their blissful reign in human hearts, you have the answer. Then you will touch nothing indifferent in itself without lifting it to the plane which you yourself occupy. The undevout will become devout to you, the unsacred sacred. And as the prophet saw in vision that the very bells upon the horses in the street bore the inscription "Holiness unto the Lord," so will you inscribe upon every act and deed of yours, your amusements, your avocations, your recreations, your business and the toil by which you live, the selfsame "Holiness unto the Lord." This is what we mean when we pray: *Thy kingdom come.*

Here is a mighty inspiration. "The seventh angel sounded and there followed great voices in heaven and they said: the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." "Are become," if you please, and not "shall become." It was a daring, soaring, aspiring prevision. The kingdoms of this world! In the hour when "the beast" was triumphant, when from beneath the altar the souls of the martyred cried, "How long, O God, how long?" —the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ! Has our vision waxed dim or our faith failed? Have our hearts grown cold or is our imagination paralyzed by fear? The kingdoms of literature, of art, of music, of science, the kingdoms of wealth and achievement and ambition, the kingdoms of commerce and industry and politics, our kingdoms, the kingdoms over which each sovereign conscience rules, and the kingdoms we have made of our cities and of all our international relations, the kingdoms where greed rules and passion and low life in high places, and

the kingdoms of heathen darkness in the far lands —the kingdoms of this world *are* become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ! We will claim them for His, and will be satisfied with nothing which excludes Him from any corner of His kingdom. His is the right of eminent domain. And every flaunting evil must be made subject unto Him as our mighty prayer enshrines our mightier faith: *Thy kingdom come.*

Upon the intensity with which we pray this prayer depends the vigour of our own spiritual life. For each of us salvation is in it. Salvation—how easily we use the word! Salvation from what? Salvation from our own selves. Salvation from self-indulgence. Salvation from mean and narrow views. Remember the expulsive power of a new affection. No man or woman is so safe from the assault of sin as they whose lives are merged in some sacred cause. Indeed, no one of us is safe until in this way his life is hidden with Christ in God.

"No heart is pure that is not passionate
No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic."

How such a conception of religion would redeem lives from littleness! The Apostle Paul speaks of some of his friends as "fellow workers unto the Kingdom of God." Nothing less would serve them. And nothing less should serve us. We cannot confine our ministry within the walls of our church building, nor within the charmed circle of our homes. We are not fellow workers together with the Apostle, we are not fellow workers together with Christ, for our own Church or our own denomination. Names and sects and creeds and parties—how small they become! The shibboleths of sectarianism, the watchwords of denominations, the battle-cries of theological controversies—how they shrink into insignificance! Our Church is dear to us. Our homes are sacred. Party organization and denominational machinery have their values; direction of effort, limitation when need arises—all these have their place in any rational scheme of Christian service. But these things are not the end. A means to an end they may be. But the end, the one far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves, the end is the Kingdom of Heaven!

It is difficult to restrain one's language in presence of such a vision. Only the greatest words avail. One is tempted to become grandiloquent from very lack of strong and beautiful and glorious words to express the Unmeasured and the Infinite in terms of human speech. We look for the coming of a day when there shall be no more poverty nor sorrow, no more pain nor death; when the tears shall be wiped from every eye. We look for a redeemed humanity upon a regenerated earth. We look for the day when there shall be no widows weeping nor orphans starving, nor manhood and womanhood changed from the image of God. We look for the coming of a time when the clash of arms shall be no more; when there shall be no more war of armies or battle-ships or hostile tariffs; when frontier lines between nations shall be obliterated and the barriers between the peoples burnt; when oppression and injustice and hatred shall have ceased amongst mankind; when there shall be no more superstition in Asia, nor heathenism in Africa, nor oppression in Europe, nor injustice in America; no flames of blood-red

hate kindling from one end of Russia to the other; no millions starving in India, nor blood shed in rivers in the forests of the Congo; nor in the dark places of our city life the cry of the disinherited and the despoiled, the victims of man's treachery and greed. Compared with these vast dreams our sectarian bigotries and personal rivalries and the struggle for personal ends which shape our days become contemptible and grotesque. We are content to do the work that lies to our hands, loving that which is near us and around us, adding each single, solitary endeavour to our world-wide hopes, line upon line, precept upon precept, adding here some painful inch won by homely service, only in the inspiring belief in the coming of the day when

> "The peoples all are one, and all their voices blend in choric
> Hallelujah to the Maker, 'It is finished. Man is made.'"

This mighty hope has been the inspiration of the best and bravest of earth's children. Age by

age it has nerved and braced them to the most heroic endurances and endeavours. This was the true light which shone upon their path when their God-ward march began, the star-beams which lit the patriarchal ages, the first faint dawning of the morning in which walked the gray fathers of the race, and which for their faithful sons is broadening into the perfect day of God. In the foreshadowings of such a dawn, when the dayspring from on high first visited the earth, Abraham abandoned the gods of his fathers to go forth, not knowing whither he went, at the call of the Judge of all the earth, his shield and his exceeding great reward. In the flush of the morning, Moses, large in heart and brain, led a nation from bondage towards the Promised Land, and David laid the foundations of an enduring kingdom. Isaiah of Jerusalem and his tuneful brother of Babylon, the prophets of the evangel, proclaimed God's love and righteousness for all mankind, a Gospel which was to increase with the process of the suns. Through exile, oppression, and death the hope lived and glowed. Devout souls waited for the consolation of Israel,

and in the assurance that it was near prayed that they might depart in peace. John Baptist with his voice of revolution declared that though the axe was laid at the root of trees, the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

Our Lord and Saviour came; the thunders of Sinai were drowned in the still small voice that breathed from Olivet, the sun was darkened in the sky, and nature shuddered at the tragedy of Calvary; but angels rolled the stone away from the new made grave, the Conqueror of death stepped forth, bringing life and immortality to light, and a deathless hope became the changeless certainty of mankind. Then Augustine saw as in a vision the City of God; Bernard of Clugny beheld it from afar, a sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect; and for the hope of it and love's dear sake beneath Umbria's skies Francis of Assisi wooed his sweet bride Poverty, the sister of his Christ. John Milton in his blindness saw the heavenly light and in the brightness of its shining set himself to assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to men. John Bunyan from the prison cell which

he called a den dreamed his golden dream of the progress earth's pilgrims yet shall make from the City of Destruction over the Delectable Mountains and to Beulah Land. Oliver Cromwell, uncrowned king of men, flung open the world-gates for a free, world-conquering race. Men of the Book, men of faith, men of sanity and vision, trusted themselves to Atlantic waves and to a stern and rock-bound coast and laid the foundations of this radiant empire of the West. Jesuit missionaries marched from the Atlantic to the Mississippi; men who feared God and none beside sang their hymns amid the fastnesses of the Alleghanies; Roger Williams in his forest exile made secure the liberty of the soul for the nation still unborn. Carey, Marshman, and Ward expected great things from God, attempted great things for God, and gloried in the hope of the world won for Christ. Comber, Grenfell, Hannington, Paton, Chalmers, Morrison, Judson—what names are these on the bead-roll of the immortals! And how they lived and loved and died in the grace and fervour of this prayer: *Thy kingdom come!*

But —

> "Never was to chosen race
> That unstinted tide confined;
> Thine is every time and place,
> Fountain sweet of heart and mind."

In ancient Egypt it was seen that the gifts of the gods were to him who sowed smiles and not tears, and in their Book of the Dead it was written that the pure soul was he who had prepared the way for the coming of the Kingdom of Love. Amid the Persian hills Zoroaster called upon each brave heart to follow light and do the right and give battle with the prince of the powers of the air. Plato saw that an eternal love and beauty and goodness wait upon the soul from its birth. Socrates held and taught that man only lives to obey the commands of God. And in after ages Thomas More in his "Utopia," Bacon in his "New Atlantis," Campanella in his "City of the Sun," devout beyond their knowledge and their thought, pointed men's minds to the ever-growing hope of humanity that the creation itself should be delivered from the bondage of corruption, while generations prayed the prayer: *Thy kingdom come.*

The world has known terror and darkness. Right has raised its head upon the scaffold. Wrong has trembled on the throne. Hell has enlarged its appetite against the children of God. But the thought of the kingdom has changed agony to triumph and the groans of the martyrs into the bliss of the redeemed. And still that hope flourishes in human hearts:

"'Tis weary watching wave by wave,
And yet the tide heaves onward;
We climb, like corals, grave by grave,
That pave a pathway sunward;
We are driven back, for our next fray
A newer strength to borrow,
And where the Vanguard camps To-day,
The Rear shall rest To-morrow.

"Through all the long, dark night of years
The people's cry ascendeth,
And earth is wet with blood and tears,
But our meek sufferance endeth.
The few shall not forever sway,
The many moil in sorrow;
The Powers of Hell are strong To-day;
Our Kingdom come To-morrow.

"Though hearts brood o'er the Past, our eyes
With smiling Futures glisten;
For lo! our day bursts up the skies,
Lean out your souls and listen.
The world is rolling Freedom's way,
And ripening with her sorrow;
Take heart; who bear the Cross To-day
Shall wear the crown To-morrow."

By the light of the distant ideal we walk our daily path. Its radiant hues make drudgery divine. Our lowly toil carries its world-wide implications. We are happy in the small thing we achieve because we know it to be world-great, shot through and through with the spirit of this dominating prayer: *Thy kingdom come.*

IV

Thy Will be Done, as in Heaven, so on Earth

Nobody ought to despair whose cause is just. Nobody is justified in despairing if he has a righteous cause to uphold. It may not be given to him to see it triumph, but that is only a question of time; it is an immaterial thing; but the right itself, why, there is no power on earth can ever stay it. None can ever defeat it in the end. God Himself is pledged to its final victory.—*William Lloyd Garrison.*

IV

THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN HEAVEN, SO ON EARTH

THIS is not a prayer of Resignation but of Consecration. It is not the plea for patience by which an afflicted heart seeks peace, but the vow of a vigorous soul that dreams and dares. It is not a sigh of surrender to inscrutable and implacable fate. It is the swift intake of breath and the bracing of the nerve for renewed struggle to bring in the eternal reign of righteousness.

Too often we have thought otherwise. And we have thought weakly. In the midst of our disappointed purposes and broken hopes this has seemed to us a prayer for that dutiful and humble acceptance of unavoidable ills which shuts out repining and clings to the mercy of God. The prayer has been too often a mournful wail. At the best, its plaintive tones have spoken the sadness of the spirit that seeks solace in submission.

When the heart has been wrung by anguish, when the waters have overwhelmed us, the proud waters have gone over our soul, when we have been beaten back and trampled down and when the sun has darkened in our sky and the stars forgot their shining, in the wreck of a career, in the blight of hope, when the unforeseen and the unlooked for has made mock of our ambitions, when a lingering sickness has taken out of our life that which alone made life worth living, or death robbed us of that which has given us the best joy we have known on earth and left us, as it seemed, friendless, unpitied, homeless in the night, then we have tried to stay our faltering faith on God with this prayer of fathomless pain: *Thy will be done.*

Charlotte Elliott's favourite but too feminine hymn reflects the mood in which the prayer rises to our lips:

My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home on life's rough way,
Oh, teach me from my heart to say,—
Thy will be done!

If Thou shouldst call me to resign
What most I prize,—it ne'er was mine:
I only yield Thee what was Thine;
Thy will be done!

May the day never dawn for any man or woman when you cannot pray that prayer! May you never know the sorrow so crushing, the loss so charged with agony, that your devout will cannot make your own the will that governs the universe, and pray with deepest fervour, from the midst of blinding tears: *Thy will be done.*

But the mistake is in supposing that it is the prayer for such times and such trials alone, in supposing, indeed, that it is first and chiefly a prayer for these experiences of affliction and loss. Consider the words of the petition as our Lord teaches them to us: *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth*—as in heaven where is no blight nor sorrow nor bitter grief, where there shall be pain and sighing no more, and where God shall wipe the tears from every eye. There—where there is no resignation and no submission, and no sad endurance of unavoidable ills because there is no trouble there—God's will is done, and our prayer

is that it may be accomplished, as in heaven, so on earth. Let the tried and suffering heart pray this prayer in the depth of mortal pain, but also, let us pray it as devoutly when life runs riotously in our veins and all the joy of the world is coursing in our blood. When you are young, daring, aspiring, when you have energy, ambition, pride, when you are capable of heroism, chivalry, and gallant enterprise, then I beg you pray this prayer, *Thy will be done.* Bind it upon your heart as a spell. Bear it upon your spirit as a passion. See it written in the sky above you and on the earth beneath your feet. Read it everywhere! Let the trees mean it and the grassy sod and the city street and the throngs that come and go. Let life have no other grander meaning than this which vibrates in our living prayer: *Thy will be done!* In us, by us, through us: *Our Father, Thy will be done!* In our homes and in our hearts, in the commerce of our country, in her industry, finance, law, science, in the government of her cities, in her home and foreign policies, in her relations with inferior peoples, in all for which America has been raised

up by the God of Nations—*Our Father, Thy will be done!* And not in this land alone, but in every land beneath the sun let the mighty prayer go sounding on, and there may He who hears and answers prayer respond to the appealing of His people! As in heaven, so in the business of cities, the affairs of states, and in the broad fields of international life: *Thy will be done!* And let us seek to answer our own prayer—as far as in us lies. Let us despise ourselves if we seek to cast on God the burthen He in His gracious providence would impose on us. At the least and the lowest, let us seek coöperative service with Him. Let us be fellow workers together with God. Let us do His will and count that day ill spent in which we have not sincerely tried to help Him to get His will done, as in heaven, so in the little corner of the earth in which He has placed us. Charlotte Elliott's hymn is good —for the hour of bereavement, pain, and loss. But life is not all bereavement, pain, and loss. Life is resolution, achievement, attainment. Life is "going-on"! It is progress, victory. It is the conquest of the world for Christ. And a less

familiar but not less spiritual hymn echoes the Saviour's prayer,—

> O God, not only in distress,
> In pain, and want, and weariness,
> Thy tender Spirit stoops to bless,
> Thy will is done.
>
> But oftener on the wings of peace
> And girt about with tenderness,
> Thou comest, and all troubles cease,
> Thy will is done.

If we are to pray this prayer it must be intelligently offered. For it may degenerate into the expression of a Mohammedan fatalism, a slavish acquiescence in evil conditions, a blasphemous ascription of the consequences of man's sin and selfishness to the operations of Almighty love. We may be tempted to find an excuse for our incompetence or laziness or self-indulgence in a supposed will of God. When the people of England were dying of starvation in sight of barns and warehouses stored with food, when the pallid faces of wives and little ones hungering even unto death raised hell in the hearts of English men, the Hereditary Earl Marshal of Eng-

land said that a drink of hot water with a dash of curry powder in it was admirable for staving off the pangs of hunger, and a famous bishop declared that people who could not get bread would find turnips an admirable substitute. When the people demanded a share in the making of laws under which they were supposed to live but by which they were really done to death, another spiritual pastor and master said that for his very life he did not know what the people had to do with the laws except obey them, nor what they had to do with the taxes—except pay them. Nothing was easier for the smug and the self-satisfied than to tell the famished hordes of miserable men to submit themselves to the will of God. And Ebenezer Elliott, in that fine hymn which we sometimes sing, sent his protest to the throne of God:—

Shall crime bring crime forever,
  Strength aiding still the strong?
Is it Thy will, O Father,
  That man shall toil for wrong?
"No," say Thy mountains; "No," Thy skies;
Man's clouded sun shall brightly rise,
And songs ascend instead of sighs.
    God save the people!

That such a protest has been needed in this country Lowell's poem "Hunger and Cold" bears witness :—

> God has plans man must not spoil,
> Some were made to starve and toil,
> Some to share the wine and oil,
> We are told :
> Devil's theories are these,
> Stifling hope and love and peace,
> Framed your hideous lusts to please,
> Hunger and Cold !

It is not with such refinements of cruelty as these, cruelty veiling itself with hypocritical devoutness, that we will seek to understand and obey the will of God. When pestilence stalked through the land of England the leaders of the Church memorialized the Prime Minister to appoint a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer. Lord Melbourne refused. He said, "Let your men of science find out the cause of the plague and we will very soon put a stop to it." Lord Melbourne was a scoffer. It was he who came away from a Sunday morning service once foaming at the mouth with rage. He cursed the preacher and said : "He is one of those pesti-

lent fellows who suppose that religion has to do with a man's private life." But on the occasion of his reply to the demand for national humiliation the scoffer placed himself in line with true Christian devotion. Let us find the cause of pestilence, plague, and penury, of disease, dismay, and defeat, and let us remove the cause. Let us take up every stumbling-block from the way of all the people and give free course to health and wealth and human joy. And so with heroic service let us do our share to make it possible that God's will shall be done, as in heaven, so throughout this earth of ours.

"To make it possible!" Does the phrase startle you? One would like to think it did. One would wish to believe that people listen to sermons with such intent and eager interest that their minds are caught up into a critical attitude by such a sentence. *Are we to believe that God's will is not done?* If it is not, whose will is done in the world? If it is done, why go on praying, as though it were yet to be sought: *Thy will be done?* The dilemma appears grave. Truly, there is more in the Lord's Prayer than we ever

thought. Its petitions are not so simple as they look. Are we to make it possible, or even to help to make it possible, for God's will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven? Then what will is even now being accomplished amongst us?

Put it practically. Do you believe that it is God's will that men should drink themselves drunk, be riotous, murderous, and abominable? Do you believe it is God's will that Southern mobs should pour coal oil over a writhing fellow creature, white or black, and roast him at the stake? Do you believe it is God's will that, as declared by an American judge, corruption should be found to be ingrained in American public life and that forty per cent. of municipal expenditure should be "graft"? Do you believe it is God's will that the government of American cities should be, in President Eliot's words, "the worst in the world"? Do you believe it is God's will that a Leopold should reign upon the throne of Belgium and that under his rule, in the blood-stained forests of the Upper Congo, millions of men and women and children should be done to death amid nameless outrages

and agonies, that his life should be infamous even amid the infamous records of European palaces, and that, full of years and dishonour, outliving the Psalmist's threescore years and ten, he should die at last in the odour of sanctity? Do you believe that these things are all in harmony with the will of God? You believe nothing of the kind. All ethical teaching would be a farce and this prayer would be a mirthless comedy.

"And yet," the thoughtful mind may argue, "I cannot feel that God's will is not done. For if it is not, what remains? Are we in the hands of a blind chance? Does the world spring from a fortuitous combination of atoms? Is man no more than the cunningest of nature's clocks? Or do we stand in the presence of a baffled Christ and a triumphant devil?"

It is comforting to be able to fall back upon the suggestions of great and inspired men of the Bible times. The prophets undoubtedly thought of God as sometimes losing His gracious purposes and being driven to accept some alternative and lower course. Whether you can accept their view or not, it is helpful to understand it.

They lived very near to the heart of God. The author of the Eighty-first Psalm, for instance, represents God as lamenting the waywardness of the people and admitting that because of it He had to let them go their own sinning way, yet protesting that if they would but hearken to Him He would work out for them a golden future:

But My people hearkened not to My voice;
And Israel would none of Me.
So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart,
That they might walk in their own counsels.
Oh, that My people would hearken unto Me,
That Israel would walk in My ways!
I would soon subdue their enemies,
And turn My hand against their adversaries.

The meaning cannot be missed. The Psalmist would not have it that it was God's will that the nation should desert and forget the Lord. But seeing that they had done so, God was driven to another and a different course from that which was in His mind towards them when the nation was called to obey Him. He would let them go their own way, follow after their own devices, and see what came of it all.

We will return to this conception of God's providence in a moment. But observe that the author of the Eighty-first Psalm is not alone. In the time of Exile we find Isaiah of Babylon ascribing similar sentiments and similar recourse to God. In chapter forty-eight he represents God as crying to His people, "Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea!" In plain words, Isaiah of Babylon thought that God had been driven by the sins of the people to take a course different from that which He could and would have delighted to take with a faithful nation. The sob and cry of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem has echoed in the souls of His followers for nineteen centuries: "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her brood beneath her wings; but ye would not!" The divine purpose was thwarted by human perversity. Surely the authority of Scripture is for us when we reason that the first will of God is not accomplished. What then?

It seems that with God as with us there is an

ideal best as well as a feasible best, a best possible under the circumstances. The ideal best is His will. He wills for us that which is ideally, conceivably the best of all—the perfect result is the perfect will of God. But this ideally best includes the freedom of the human will. It would not be best that we should be so coerced by His almightiness as to act under compulsion and not by free choice. And in the exercise of our free will we may choose badly, wrongly, choose evil and ensue it. And it results that in consequence of God's desire for the ideally best, our freedom, we are able to choose and as a matter of fact do choose a life which sets His will at defiance. Then what happens and what will happen? Would it be good for us to know? Seeing that we do not know and cannot know, may we not believe that it is good for us that we must remain ignorant? "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." There are three possibilities, and to the thought of one or other we shall incline according to temperament, training, and the spirit that is in us.

There is first the terrible position of Calvinism, hard and logical and relentless. God's will is done in the reprobation and damnation of the sinner just as in the election and salvation of the saint. We have said in our prayers that the God of the summer days is the God of winter's storms and snows. We have said that the zephyrs of a sweet May morning are not more the instruments of His tenderness than December's icy blast and the tornado that destroys. The Calvinist asks us to be consistent. He builds his armour-plated system and defies us to pierce its dialectic anywhere. God's will, he asserts, is sovereign, impeccable, irresistible through all God's universe; and if the sinner is damned his damnation is just and the will of God is done. May the God whom Jesus called Father be humbly thanked for the word of an ancient sage: "It hath not pleased God to give His people salvation by dialectic." And let Whittier's voice still be heard in the land:

"But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds,
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads."

There is, secondly, the belief that the will of God fails of its first perfect hope, and that as He willed to make men free He has to content His almighty heart while His ideal will is thwarted in the lives and destiny of His wayward children. The Eighty-first Psalm, now to go back to it, says in effect that God had to let the people go their way and find out what would result from their sin.

It is human experience. Why does not God send an angel with a flaming sword to bar my path as I seek to rush out from the Paradise of His appointing? As a matter of fact, He seems more ready to send His messengers armed with the living lightning to oppose my steps when I seek to come to lost Eden again. Then I find no place of repentance though I seek it with tears. Why did no thunderbolt strike me or earthquake swallow me up alive rather than that I should have sinned desperately, defiantly, sinned myself to eternal death? Should not a loving Father rather slay His child than suffer his soul to be corrupted through his death in life? And then, though He slew me, might I not trust Him still?

No; it is not God's way. The warning is given, is repeated, is reinforced by every terrible consideration from Sinai to Calvary and by every experience of men and nations. The almighty voice goes crashing on: "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and the nation that will not obey Him, God sends down to hell. And then—then—then—it is as though God moved aside and said:

The way is open! Go your way! Let him alone—men and angels, portents and prophecy and punishment, earth and heaven—let him alone! Let him take his own course and eat of the fruit of his ways and learn in the black, black night what he would not learn in the shining day!

And if this is so—what will be the end thereof? I know not. I can only pray:

O God, leave us not alone! Smite, avenge, slay—or comfort, console, convince—salt us with fire, winnow us with the tempest, break our hard hearts and stubborn wills—but leave us not alone! Come to us everywhere!

And yet as I know that love does sometimes fail here, I wonder—oh, I wonder—if love is to fail everlastingly, and God's perfect will to be baffled while souls are for ever lost!

And then, in the third place, there is the great and wonderful hope, expressed with such magnificent and glorious assurance by men like George Macdonald, profoundly influencing so much of our modern thinking, that God's will shall and will and must be done. He willeth not the death of a sinner. It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of His little ones should perish. His will shall be done, and it is His will that all the earth should come to the knowledge of the Lord. They who can hold this conviction with unfaltering certainty say to the lost—and to them "lost" can only mean "not found yet"—"You must repent and turn to God, you *must*. You will have to repent sooner or later, and if you leave it until later, then you will have to repent of not repenting now! Wherefore come to the arms that are open wide and enter into the city by the gates which are never closed by day, and there is no

night there!" This is an inspiring hope. Ages may pass. But through all God works round to the point which all along He had in view and to the end from which He has never swerved. This is Browning's titanic faith:

> "My own hope is, a sun will pierce
> The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
> That, after Last, returns the First,
> Though a wide compass round be fetched;
> That what began best, can't end worst,
> Nor what God blessed once prove accurst."

But even then, as you see, the ideally best is not done. And the reflection has in it enough of pain for every one of us to drive us to insistent prayer and consecrated effort in order that the sins of men may every day become less and less terrible, that indeed and of a truth the consummation may one day be reached when God's will is done, as in heaven, so on earth.

So now consider that for each one of us there is the possibility of harmonious working with His will or of hopeless opposition to it.

There is a plan for our life. How we may

know what that plan is cannot be told in a word. The method of discovery is the burden of many a sermon and many a prayer. It is the greater part of religion to discover and to reveal it. But the warning is clear: if you try to lift your life out of that plan which is in the mind of God, nothing but mischief and misery will result. You may try to make crooked what He has meant to be straight, and only wretchedness will follow. You may make of yourself a painter when you were meant for a physician, a preacher when you were meant for a lawyer, or a student of literature when you were meant for a man of affairs, and all your nerves for all your life will be as sweet bells jangled, out of tune, and harsh. Try to take your life out of God's hands, to be self-indulgent when He means you to be self-sacrificing, to be self-seeking when He means you to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, to follow the flesh when He means you to live by the Spirit, to be a man or woman of the world when He means you to be a burning and a shining light in the Church of Christ—and the want of harmony will jar the framework

of your life for ever. Bitter black moments there will come when you know the meaning of that discord. My brother, my sister, you are not in your right place. Your place is at the Cross, by the Open Grave: your place is near the Throne of God. You are in opposition. It is hard to kick against the pricks. Wisdom counsels you to pray this prayer: *Thy will be done.*

But, oh, the joy of feeling ourselves one with the eternal order! Oh, the bliss of an immovable confidence that all is well with us because we are where God would have us stand, and are becoming what He would have us be! This is peace. Plans are made for us; we need not be anxious. A place for us is secure; we need not rush and scramble. The future is safe—what shall we fear? This is purity. This is holiness. Life naturally, of itself, without conscious effort, stress, and strain, grows sweeter and truer and lovelier, as day by day we find ourselves in harmony with the pure and holy will of God. And this is power. "I am not anxious," declared Lincoln when a friend said he hoped that God would be with them, "I am not anxious that

God should be on our side; I am only concerned that we should be on the side of God." Let the weakest amongst us be sure of that one fact, that we are on the side of God, and strength is not far to seek. Life grows in wholeness, completeness, in robust and mighty strength. We confess our weakness, the imperfection of our plans, our limited conceptions and attainments; but assured that we are on the side of God an unknown force is ours. We go from strength to strength. The clouds we so much dread turn to solid rock beneath our feet. And still we climb and climbing still achieve, for our will is as the will of God, and our life is in the prayer, a prayer which, when truly offered, tends to fulfill itself: *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.*

V

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

God is a kind Father. He sets us all in the places where He wishes us to be employed; and that employment is truly our Father's business. He chooses work for all His creatures which will be delightful to them, if they do it simply and humbly. He gives us always strength enough and sense enough for what He wants us to do. If we either tire ourselves or puzzle ourselves, it is our own fault. And we may always be sure, whatever we are doing, that we cannot be pleasing Him if we are not happy ourselves.—*John Ruskin.*

V

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

WHAT meaning do you attach to the word "daily"? For what is it that you ask, exactly, when you pray, *Give us this day our daily bread?* What is "daily bread"?

If you mean to ask for a supply this day sufficient for the needs of this day—to-morrow's necessities being left to be provided for when to-morrow is here and has become to-day—why, you have probably come to the heart of this prayer as our Lord taught it and meant us to use it. If the phrase means this to you we must say that it is a good phrase, and continue to employ it. But the word of which it is supposed to be a translation has been the torture of theologians and expositors. Probably the meaning of the petition is precisely what you suppose—daily supply for daily needs, daily strength for daily living. But what is the exact meaning of the word itself nobody knows.

The word is a coined word. It is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It is not found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It is not found in Greek literature. Origen, less than two hundred years after our Lord spoke, reported that he could not find the word either in the works of classical writers or in the common speech of the uneducated. It is not likely that in this prayer, intended by our Lord to be a model for His disciples, He would introduce an unknown word manufactured by Him for the occasion. It looks as though our Lord had indeed spoken in Aramaic, and that when the evangelists began to write their Gospels in Greek they coined this word to represent what Jesus said. So puzzled were the great men of the early Church that Jerome actually made it read "supersubstantial bread"—a reading admirably calculated to prevent anybody ever offering the prayer again. Think of teaching your child to pray: "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread!" And Jerome explained that "supersubstantial bread" referred to Jesus Christ Himself, who is called in Scripture the Bread of Life,

the true bread which came down from heaven—so taking out of the prayer all its sweet simplicity, all its childlike reliance upon God's gracious care for us. Tertullian, Cyril, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine—what names are these!—all taught that the bread referred to is spiritual, and that the prayer has no reference to our physical needs. One cannot be too grateful, in the presence of such aberrations of judgment, for the grim remark of John Bright about John Stuart Mill, that "the worst of these great thinkers is that they so often think wrong." Erasmus thought that a reference to physical food would be out of place in so heavenly a prayer; and there are modern teachers who are as positive as he was that the reference is purely spiritual. Alas, how ready we always are to refine away the direct and beautiful intimacies of God's dealings with us, and to substitute for them theological quibbles, transcendental imaginings, and cobweb follies that come from nowhere and lead in the same direction! The phrase "daily bread" comes to us from the Latin; it was adopted by Tyndale and by Luther, and so passed into King James' Version. It was

adopted, says the historian, "in a kind of critical despair"—let us say in a moment of inspiration, by a flight of genius. And let us cherish all the lovely hope and confidence which it represents. "Prayer for the oncoming day" is perhaps as good a literal rendering as we could make, and so we will pray for supply just for the day before us, and here as elsewhere it shall be "one step enough for me." The petition, as it appears in Luke's Gospel, with its magnificent redundancy, its divine tautology of love and faith, represents the devout attitude of one who asks, depends, and trusts: *Give us day by day our daily bread.*

We are told that family prayers are a thing of the past. The proportion of homes in this city in which the day begins with the reading of Scripture and the invocation of God's blessing must be infinitesimally small. We are told that the conditions of modern city life make such a practice physically impossible. If that is true, the advice of Gladstone to his son at Oxford has still more point: "It is not difficult, it is most beneficial, to cultivate the habit of inwardly turning the thoughts to God, though but for a moment,

in the course of or during the intervals of our business; which continually presents occasions requiring His aid and guidance." Suppose we formed this habit and held to it. Suppose we prayed this prayer, constantly, intelligently, with the heart and with the understanding also—*Give us this day our daily bread*—what should you say would be involved?

Well, first and most obviously, a disdain of the bread which God does not give!

Mercury was the Roman god who presided over barter, trade, and all commercial enterprise. There is a Latin word formed from his name which is the equivalent of our word "cheat." The Roman merchant sprinkled himself with water from a laurel leaf before the altar of Mercury, and entreated that complacent god to look with indulgence upon whatever false measures the tradesman had found it expedient to use in the pursuit of wealth. When the Pagan wished to pray, "God bless our cheating," he came to Mercury. You cannot bring such prayers to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity. If you are to pray

to our God, *Give us this day our daily bread*, you must not at the same time think to accept the gifts of low and mean deities. You cannot worship the Living God and at the same time bow before the "Goddess of Getting-On" and ask her aid in escaping from what Carlyle called "the hell of the English," which is equally the hell of New York, viz: the fear of not making enough money or not making it quick enough, and sacrifice at her altar your dignity, your self-respect, your reverence for the old-fashioned virtues of honesty, truth, and regard for your fellow man.

How splendid it would be if you could get back to the pious idea which lies behind the word "calling" as a synonym for your trade, your profession, your business in life! It is a *calling* —something to which you are called as truly as the preacher to his Gospel message and the missionary to the tribes who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Your business is a great and sacred thing. It is meant to add to the wealth of this old earth and to the comfort of God's children. It is meant to increase from day to day the sum total of human happiness. It is in-

tended to bring the most widely scattered of peoples, divided by oceans and continents, by race, nationality, language, religion, and social custom, into fellowship and friendship. It is meant to level mountains and bridge rivers—to level to the dust, that is to say, all barriers that rise between nations and dry up all the jealousies and passions which flood our human hearts. The Jew hated the sea, and the aged prisoner on Patmos thought of it as something that separated nation from nation. He looked forward to a time when there should be no more jealousy, suspicion, or distrust between the peoples of the earth, and so he said, "and the sea is no more." We do not hate the sea. And we think of it now as a means of communication. It is our highway, and the nations travel along it fearlessly one to the other. Will you think of your trade, your business, to-morrow's toil by which you live, in this way? It is an endless chain of influences and activities which bring people together. Its object is mutual satisfaction, mutual comfort, mutual help. In your office you are not working for yourself and your family alone: you are

forging from material things spiritual links which bind hearts and peoples together.

It is easy to be cynical. You think it is clever. Perhaps it is simply foolish. God and the ages and eternity shall judge. You are saying, "That is not a view of my business which ever occurred to me, and it is not a view which would occur to anybody who had to sit at my desk, meet my competitors, repel the attacks which are made on me, and protect the interests which are properly my care. Let the other man look after himself. I have enough to do to look after myself." All very simple and straightforward, no doubt. But into what name were you baptized, his, whom the thieves of Rome honoured, or that of Him who died upon a cross?

Put it to yourself as a question. Would the world be a better place if you and people like you took a low view or a high view of business, its responsibilities and possibilities? If the New Testament view could be taken and acted upon, would life be sweeter and happier than it is? Then, as you have named the name of Christ, as far as in you lies, why should you not brace

yourself to disdain with heroic fortitude *mercurialis*—the Roman word for cheating, but you may call it by any name which competition and the pressure of modern enterprise have invented—why should you not heroically disdain the gifts of Mercury and seek only those which our God may bestow in answer to our prayer: *Give us this day our daily bread?*

One need not make light of the difficulties. They are real and great. Moreover, there is no promise that they will grow less and less oppressive in the near future. Competition will grow keener, and the pressure upon your children will be greater than it is upon you. Yet this question stands: Would life grow harder or easier if we prayed this prayer and lived in the childlike confidence in our Father's care which it implies? Let the answer be practical, the result of our analysis of those elements of modern life which constitute the pressure of our days.

This pressure is not created by the toil for bread but by the strife for more than bread. That is to say, the difficulty is not in securing for all mankind the necessaries of life. The difficulty

comes from aggrandizement, avarice, and colossal selfishness. The difficulty comes from the belief which we have fastened upon ourselves that vast superfluities are necessaries and from the fact that our belief that they are necessary has made them so. And yet it is bad psychology—it is a poor, mean, stunted view of human nature—which says that human selfishness is the originating passion in the strife of our day. It is a development, not a primary cause. The real, first cause is not desire for wealth but fear of poverty. It is not anxiety to be rich but terror of being poor. A man feels himself driven into the battle by necessity. He believes that all is a terrific fight and that he must either kill or be killed. Naturally, he prefers not to be killed. So he fights tooth and nail and claw for daily bread, for position, and for security. Then he finds that he must still fight tooth and nail and claw to keep the place which he has won and maintain for even twenty-four hours the security for which the conflict was waged. So he sets in motion a thousand activities, taking to himself weapons of offense and defense; and so

the war goes on. The strong successful man likes it. It appeals to the fighting instinct which he has brought up from our animal ancestry, and it appeals as well to the masterly intellect, the genius for organization and administration and command which the ages have developed in him. And it becomes so much a part of his second nature that when he puts the armour off and lays down the sword he—dies! But meanwhile his tremendous operations are increasing the pressure because heightening the fear of others who so are forced into the conflict.

Well, now, what is your answer to the question: Would life grow harder or easier if we prayed this prayer and lived in the spirit which it breathes? Suppose that paralyzing terror lifted from our souls: suppose that we had no fear as to the daily supply of daily needs: suppose we felt that industry, intelligence, probity, would have their reward, that our bread should be certain and our water sure: suppose we could be calm in the confidence that while we do our share diligently, wisely, honestly, God, as a loving Father, will assure the comfort of His chil-

dren and give all that is necessary for their happiness and usefulness—you know whether life would grow harder or easier for mankind.

And it is this spirit of which the prayer is full. It is useless to say that in our day people cannot live in harmony with it. Millions of people are living in harmony with it. Idleness is not taught. Recklessness is not enjoined. You are not to ask of God what God expects you to do for yourselves. But oh! the bliss of feeling that fear is monstrously out of place, that God is the All-Father who cares for His children, and that His children can trust His unfailing providence! Reject the fruits of dishonesty; seek the bread which your Father gives and strive for none which your Father has not blessed; and to the limit alike of your influence and your responsibility you have prepared for the dawn of a sweeter, gentler, nobler life upon this earth when all God's children shall live in the sacredness of love and trust, the love and trust of this childlike prayer: *Give us this day our daily bread.*

Very wonderful is the place of this prayer. It is preceded by the petition, *Thy will be done, as*

in heaven, so on earth. It is followed by, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* That is to say, it comes between the deepest prayer of faith and the deepest prayer of penitence. When the significance of this is fully grasped one of two things will happen. Either, like Erasmus already quoted, we shall say that such a mundane petition is out of place in this so heavenly prayer, or else we shall realize as we never have done before God's interest in us. This is the God who cares for the sparrows, oh, ye of little faith. This is He of whom Jesus says, *What man is there of you who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone, or if he shall ask for a fish will give him a serpent?* And, anticipating the immediate and universal negative, "No father who deserved to be a father could do such a thing," goes on, *If ye then*—being what you are—*know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him?* Here is no need for stated forms of worship, costly ceremonial, and the pride and pomp of ritual. God's interest in us is direct, immediate, and inti-

mate. We are to speak to Him of our daily needs, and He will listen to His children's cry.

The child-spirit represents the true relation of each one of us to God. There are unruly, undutiful, ungracious children, and such too often are we. But the spirit of ideal childhood is the spirit of the ideal relation of each human soul to God. We are not to think of Him as "a stream of tendency not ourselves which makes for righteousness," nor as "the first great cause," nor as "the resident force of the universe." We shall not even be most helped by thinking of Him chiefly as the Creator of the heavens and the earth or as the Judge of the living and the dead. We may not think of Him as a dark, inscrutable, though majestic Power before whom we all must bend in lowliness and awe. We are to think of Him as care-free, happy, innocent, and sweet-natured children think of father or mother who stands to the child's mind for perfect goodness and unfailing tenderness. Hymns, prayers, sermons, creeds, definitions, churches which obscure or harden this conception of God and tend to make of Him

a more distant Deity, violate the first requirement of religion. The words of our Lord stand sure, *Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child, he shall in nowise enter therein.* And the stoutest of saints, finding stern work to do in this busy, bustling world of ours, will add vigour to his heart and heroic endurance to his soul in proportion as he receives the kingdom in the spirit of ideal childhood and trusts his Father, God.

Now it came to pass that Jesus had been crucified, and the hearts of the disciples were heavy within them. There were present Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. And Simon Peter verily thought within himself that the dream of a Kingdom of Heaven on earth was past and gone, and he saith unto them, "I go a-fishing." They say unto him, "We also come with thee." They went forth and that night they took nothing. But when day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach, yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. When he whom Jesus loved and who lived to tell the story said unto Peter, "It is the

Lord," that brave, weather-battered man girt his fisherman's coat about him and flung himself into the surf and battled to his Master's side. And the other disciples followed, and in the gray light of the Galilean morning they perceived that it was Christ. And this was after the agonizing scenes on Calvary which had caused their souls to melt as water, after the sun had been darkened in the heavens, the rocks had been rent and the graves had given up their dead! This was after the seal had been placed upon the tomb and the watch set. Then this was the risen and glorified Christ who had said of Himself, *I am the Resurrection and the Life!* And He, no longer thorn-crowned and shamefully entreated, but clothed with light as with a garment and crowned as with the sun in heaven, what had He done while He walked the shore and waited for the dawning of the morning? Oh, the wonder of it, the unspeakable, incredible marvel of it—He had gathered the coals, laid the fuel, made the fire, cooked the fish, broken the bread, and now He says to them, *Children, come and break your fast!* The Christ does

this, the risen Christ, the Christ glorified, triumphant! He stoops to manual toil; He busies Himself with kitchen deeds. He thinks of His friends, toiling in rowing, disappointed and hungry—*Children, come and break your fast!*

Who shall say how much of this story is fact and how much fancy? Who shall say how much of it the author of John's Gospel means us to take as plain prose and how much is divine, radiant poetry? We only know that we do not know how to express our amazement at this conception of the Christ. And we ask, What was the impression which Christ made upon the hearts of His disciples when one of them could conceive such a story and dare to hand it down to us? Here is no forensic Christ of the Creeds, no ecclesiastical Christ of Church fiction. Here is the tender human Christ, the brother of us all. Nineteen centuries have rolled away. What the first century meant for parable we may take for crude fact, or what it believed as fact we may refine away into imagery and dream. But still we hear the words of Christ our Lord, *Children,*

come and break your fast! And taught by such a Saviour we can begin to pray again our childhood's prayer, *Our Father, who art in heaven; give us this day our daily bread.*

VI

Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Also Have Forgiven Our Debtors

Thou bringest all again; with Thee
Is light, is space, is breadth, and room
For each thing fair, beloved, and free,
To have its hour of life and bloom.

Each heart's deep instinct unconfess'd;
Each lowly wish, each daring claim;
All, all that life hath long repress'd,
Unfolds, undreading blight or blame.

Thy reign eternal will not cease;
Thy years are sure, and glad, and slow;
Within Thy mighty world of peace
The humblest flower hath leave to blow.

—*Dora Greenwell.*

VI

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS

"DEBTS" or "Sins"—it is "debts" in Matthew's Gospel and "sins" in the version of the prayer preserved by Luke. The "New Testament in Modern Speech" makes the petition run, "Forgive us our shortcomings, as we also have forgiven those who have failed in their duty towards us." But a discussion of the proper word by which the offense should be described would be trivial and finicking in the presence of the astounding second clause, "as we also have forgiven." The perfect tense is used—*have* forgiven. And we seem to be taught to do one of two things, either to lay the ground of an appeal to God to be good to us in the fact that we already have been good to people; or else to measure the possible goodness of God to us by the excellence of our own disposition. And is either of these courses thinkable?

This is not a new problem created by a modern, critical way of approaching sacred themes. The questions raised by the prayer are old—probably as old as the prayer itself. The suggestion—what seems to be the suggestion—of the prayer that we should base our plea for forgiveness upon the fact that we forgive, has raised in the minds of devout followers of Christ a hundred perplexed and perplexing doubts. A generous, impulsive, and deeply religious man is tempted to exclaim:

"I, for one, will not pray this prayer. I do not want to be forgiven by God as I forgive people who wrong me. I want to be forgiven in a larger, grander, fuller, more glorious way. I conceive of a love of God beyond and infinitely and for ever above all human love with which I might presume to compare it. And I conceive of a forgiveness of God so spontaneous, full, and free, so perfect, so divine, that the attempt to compare it with my poor limited human forgiveness borders on profanity. And if the question of the quantity or the quality of forgiveness does not arise, and the conditioning words only refer to the fact; if I am asked to pray for forgiveness

from God because I have already forgiven the one who has transgressed against me, then I flatly decline. I do not care to accept much less to plead for a boon from the hands of a deity whose boon is withheld until a sinning man like me sets the example of magnanimity. I conceive of a God whose first best name is love, a God whom Jesus bids us approach with the words of tender affection on our lips, 'Our Father,' a God who gives and loves to give. I conceive of a God who is mindful of me when I forget Him, who takes care of me when I am reckless of myself, who, as often as I wander away from Him, tries to draw me back to Himself. And I refuse to offer a prayer which is dishonouring to Him. My God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will not wait to bless me until I myself have risen to heroic heights. His mercy is over all His works."

It must be admitted that there is force in the objection. Is God's goodness no greater than ours? Is the human heart the measure of divine beneficence? Does God's impulse of mercy wait the motion of our own? Must we be good be-

fore He will be? We agree that amongst men and women it is a poor kind of person who makes his right-doing depend on that of some one else. We often see an individual who finds an excuse for his own moral downfall in the failure of another to live up to his ideals. We see it, but we never admire it. Occasionally we pity, often we despise such a man. We hear the remark, "Such and such a one would drive me away from religion altogether," though why you should be bad because some other person is not good is a question you have never yet tried to answer. You are responsible for yourself. It is no answer to the charge that you have come short of the promise of your young manhood or womanhood to say that your neighbour was no better than he should be. Then how much of this holds true of God and His relations with us? If it is wrong for us to wait to be good until some one else is good, why is it right for God? While God is God, can He be content to keep back the gifts of His grace until I am gracious? Will He really wait for me to forgive before He will show Himself forgiving? It is

hard to believe that this is the meaning of the prayer.

We call to mind the utterances of Scripture in which we delight. The mighty voice of the Hebrew prophet thrills our very souls. He is speaking as the mouthpiece of the living God and he says, *I, even I, am He, who blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake*—for Mine own sake—*and I will not remember thy sins.* Again, the rapt, ecstatic seer beholds God as a loving husband pleading with the young wife estranged and hurt. And it is God who is willing to take upon Himself the reproach of the estrangement. It is the wife who is *forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a young wife cast off, saith the Lord.* And the tender plaint goes on, confessing the momentary alienation of God's love and pledging eternal protecting tenderness and devotion: *For a small moment have I forsaken thee: but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid My face before thee, but with everlasting loving-kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.*

These declarations of "Isaiah" are wonderful. They are wonderful to us because they endeavour to set forth in human speech the "marvellous loving-kindness of our God," to embody in concrete images the height and depth and length and breadth of the unspeakable love of God. "Shall I forgive my brother seven times if he sin against me?" one asked of our Lord; and the answer was, "Yea, and unto seventy times seven." And in mood as amazed and baffled one may ask again, and as reverently, Shall I forgive seventy times seven, freely, without limit, bargain, or condition, while God Almighty waits for the wrong-doer to come to terms before He will forgive once? It cannot be thought, we are ready to say, or if it can we must cease to sing—

> For the love of God is broader
> Than the measures of man's mind,
> And the heart of the Eternal
> Is most wonderfully kind.

It is clear that we need to have this prayer explained to us. And, to go back to our objector,

when the puzzled but yet devout soul says, "I want a forgiveness from God which is unconditioned by my own, a forgiveness from Him which does not depend on my state of soul," the proper answer is, "You cannot have it. In the nature of the case you cannot have it. And your demand for it proves that you do not know what forgiveness is!"

Nine-tenths of the difficulty and misunderstanding arise from the confusion in our minds of two vastly different ideas—forgiveness of sin and remission of penalty. Men of spiritual vision, the prophets, the New Testament writers, and our Lord speak of the forgiveness of sin. We think of the remission of penalty. Misunderstanding is bound to result when they speak of one thing and we think of another. And the confusion is worse confounded when we use the word "forgiveness" to mean what it does not and cannot mean, escape from the penal consequences of wrong-doing.

The very words which we use condemn us. The dictionary is not always a safe guide in theological discussions and in the deeper things

of the spirit. But two minutes spent with the "Standard Dictionary" would have saved us years of bewilderment. To "forgive," we are told, is first of all "to cease to cherish displeasure towards," and only afterwards in common speech is it used for something different. It is the word "pardon" to which the meaning attaches "to remit the penalty." To the precise thinker these differences are clear, for, still in the language of the dictionary, "*Forgive* has reference to feelings, *pardon* to consequences; hence, the executive may *pardon*, but has nothing to do officially with *forgiving*." Yet what we want, generally, is pardon, and that which we ask for, forgiveness, we care very little about! We pray for "forgiveness": we want to be "let off." The word we use points to a state of soul and the energies at work upon and within the soul. The thing we desire has nothing to do with the soul and persistently ignores the existence of the soul. That which we crave is escape from material and physical misery.

Most of us have read at one time or another distressing letters written by a murderer within a

very short time of the execution upon him of the death penalty. And we have read of the deep piety of his conversation with the prison chaplain or clergyman who has visited him. The letters have seemed to us very dreadful, and we have been startled by the phrases of conventional religion which have fallen so glibly from his lips. They have seemed to us gross, maudlin, almost repulsive. Less than two years ago in this State there was such a case, and a young man guilty of one of the most cruel, cold-blooded, and atrocious murders on record, having killed deliberately the girl who loved and trusted him because he did not know how else to get rid of her, wrote letters from the condemned cell and when distant from the electric chair only a few days which, in moderate language, made our blood boil. He might have been the saint of God; his victim and her family and friends the impenitent sinners who stood in need of forgiveness. What is the psychological explanation of these constantly recurring phenomena? The piety begins when the doom is certain. Not until the last appeal has been dismissed and the

date of the execution is fixed beyond recall and the last hope has failed do the penitence and the piety reach their height. Human justice has found the wrong-doer in this world. He is afraid that divine justice will find him in the next. Hitherto he has bent his energies upon the task of securing pardon *here*. No faint chance of that remains. So now he wants to find pardon —that is to say, remission of penalty, escape from punishment—*there*. He is falling away from solid things into the unknown and the infinite. He is plunging into the vast and terrible unknown. The prospect is hideous, unbearable. He knows now what earthly law and the administration of law can do. O God, he wonders what heavenly law and its administration can do! Horrors seize him; the human judge has refused to pardon; he wants the celestial Judge to let him off!

Forgiveness of sin is one thing. Remission of penalty is another. The Scriptures say much about forgiveness of sin and little about escape from penalty. The Scriptures offer us on almost every page forgiveness. They cannot offer

escape from the consequences of sin, for these are part of the universal order and are immutable as the laws of gravitation. God Himself cannot take the penalty out of a life and leave the sin in it. And though the sin be forgiven, God's way of mitigating the penalty—shall we not say, His only way? at least the only way He has chosen to leave open to Himself in view of the course and constitution of the universe as He has shaped and ordered it—is to bring into the soul new forces, setting up new processes, entailing new and nobler consequences, working against the existing results of accomplished sin, and placing over against them consequences, as natural and inevitable, of a regenerated will and a consecrated life. Forgiveness is not some single act of magical surgery which cuts out of the body the punishment which wrong-doing has brought into it as a disease, leaving the body no worse for the disease which had ravaged it. Forgiveness is as the sum total of the combined action of good food, pure air, abundant rest, beneficent drugs, and the recuperative forces of nature, building up again the system weakened

by disease. Sin is a destructive force; punishment is the destruction it effects. Forgiveness is a constructive force, and its consequences, as logical and natural, have to make their way against the wasting and disintegrating power of sin.

We ought to try to understand the nature of this wonderful thing we call forgiveness. There is a new spirit within us producing new and potent results. Can we define it or describe its operations?

It is sunshine in our souls instead of cloud and gloom. The difference in our feelings is that which a person sensitive to atmospheric conditions experiences according as the day is overcast, heavy, depressing—or bright, inspiring, exhilarating, a day when it is a pure joy to be alive. Only, as the things of human life and destiny, of the soul's eternal relation to God, are infinitely more than a day of fog or an hour of good weather, so the sunshine in our soul transcends the brightness of a summer morning. It is reconciliation instead of antagonism, reconciliation with God and with the order of His world, and a feeling that one is walking again in His

favour and in the light of His love. It is peace amid the joy of conflict, and the man or woman is to be pitied who does not know what that peace is. There is evil in the world and in ourselves: there is good in the world and in ourselves. The good must do battle with the evil. When we are engaged in that battle, fighting for the good in the world and in ourselves against the evil in the world and in ourselves, we are in harmony with ourselves as God made us and with His everlasting purposes. And so, however fierce the conflict, we are at peace in the midst of it. Before, we lived in slavish acquiescence in our bondage to evil desire and evil habit: now we are urged by impulses of liberty. Before, we walked in sullen despair or cynical levity. We accepted ourselves, and we knew in our own hearts when we looked for the knowledge that our years were marked by deepening degeneracy. Now we resolve, look up, aspire, greatly dare and bravely hope. This is the change which forgiveness has worked in our souls.

Punishment of past sins there may be. If we have gambled away a fortune or spent our sub-

stance in riotous living, why, the money is gone, and all the repentance in the world will not induce the harpies who have made their profit out of our vices to give it back to us. If we have spent the formative years of our young life from fifteen to twenty-five in idleness and folly, so that we are ignorant and incompetent when we come into the world's work, penitence will not perform for us an Arabian-Nights-Dream kind of miracle and make us the equal of our contemporaries who have spurned delights and lived laborious days. If we have given ourselves over to false speaking, punishment comes in the brand of a liar and a reputation which brings us the strong man's contempt. And if we have done a criminal act and come within the grip of the law, penitence will not open for us the prison door. But—and this is the essential thing—penitence which is sincere and which brings us forgiveness, as we have carefully defined it, a new spirit in us working wondrous changes, will now set up new movements within us. By our industry, application, diligence, we may earn money to replace that which we spent in vice and foolishness. By

our devotion to our profession or business we may begin to make up for the time that we lost. By our rectitude, honour, and manifest love of truth we may recover the reputation which was smirched and the esteem of people whose esteem is worth having. And though the prison gates have closed upon us and all our lives the record stands, we may yet take our place amongst the men and women who have fallen but risen again. The consequence of the sin, it is clear, is not abolished by forgiveness. It cannot be abolished. It has become a part of the moral order of the world. Some part of the consequence may be offset by the new life which forgiveness inspires. The act cannot be undone nor the world go on as though it had never been done. Forgiveness is not remission of penalty. In us is a new, rich, joyous, believing, hopeful spirit—and this is the gift which forgiveness brings.

And now, though it may seem that we have travelled a long way round to reach the point, we see the absolute propriety and justice of this prayer: *Forgive us as we have forgiven.* We cannot be forgiven on any other terms. Shall

we again go over the phrases in which we tried to describe the state of soul which forgiveness creates? It would be wearying work. Sunshine, peace, harmony, aspiration, hope, joy, tenderness, love—but these represent the heart which forgives equally with that which receives forgiveness! Describe the spirit which cannot because it will not forgive: black resentment, fierce antagonism, jarring and jangling disharmony, turbulence, violence of thought, a soul perpetually centring round itself. This is the heart which God cannot forgive, not because of any indisposition on His part, but because the heart cannot receive forgiveness. We pray to be forgiven as we have already forgiven, not because our forgiving spirit entitles us to the forgiveness of God or wins Him to a grace like our own, but because now we have come into a condition of heart in which forgiveness can effect an entrance and have its perfect work.

We can go back to the objection to which we gave full force at the beginning of this study and to the questions we put. Must God wait to be good until we are good? Is our grace the

measure of His own? No; but *until we have the spirit which forgives we have not the spirit which can be forgiven.* If it were possible for us to receive love from God and give out hate to men; if we could be joyous towards Him and sullen to our neighbours; if we could accept from Him sunshine, tenderness, and love while we continued to walk in arrogance, hostility, and deep disdain of our fellow men, it would be because we lived in a world whose order was immoral and corrupting. Nothing of the kind is possible. We are only darkening counsel by words without knowledge, confusing ourselves by means of repeated contradiction in terms. The only spirit which can be forgiven is the spirit which forgives. And so we pray, as Jesus taught us: *Our Father; forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.*

Did you ever try to forgive when it was very difficult for you to do it? Nay, a more direct and personal question: does it happen that you cherish in your heart at this moment resentment against some person once dear to you because of a real or fancied insult or injury? Have you

brought your gift to the altar and do you now remember that you have something of hostility in your soul against your brother? Then I pray you: leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. Forgive the one who has done you wrong, and then come and offer your gift and pray your prayer: *Forgive us our shortcomings, as we also have forgiven those who have failed in their duty towards us.*

And have you realized that all who name the name of Christ are called to stand before the world in Christ's place and forgive the sins of the world? An English man of business, whose affairs called him often to Spain where he mingled freely with the country people, said that he had done effective missionary service often, after a few minutes' conversation upon indifferent themes, by bidding the peasant with whom he talked, "Remember, no man can forgive you your sins. That is all. But think about it: *No man* can forgive you your sins." As a polemic against Romanism and the alleged powers of the sacerdotal order the remark may pass. And in the deepest sense it is true: only God can for-

give us our sins. But the priest has still a function in the Christian Church. We must not deny true priesthood because of the sins of a false one. Christianity abolishes priestcraft, but it does it by universalizing priesthood. We are called to be priests, all of us, men and women who have been born of the spirit that cometh from above. We are a kingdom of priests unto our Father, God. And we have to mediate God's forgiveness to God's world. We must do more than preach forgiveness, declare that God's forgiveness can be had on terms. We must become the agents of that forgiveness. In God's name and in His power and on behalf of Christ, we must forgive the sins of men.

How? This exposition has failed utterly if you need to ask. Here is a man who has sinned. He has been guilty of repeated wrong-doing. He is down and he knows it. He has not strength to rise and does not care whether he rises or not. Now, show your contempt for this man. Tell him that he is down and that he deserves to be. He has brought it upon himself and he need not have expected anything differ-

ent. When he asks for another chance, tell him he has had too many chances as it is: "I trusted you before, and how have you repaid my confidence? There you are. There you deserve to be. And there you may stay." You have fastened that man up in his sin. You have fastened his sin up in him. You have quenched the last faint gleam of hope. You have confirmed him in his recklessness. You have persuaded him—if there was any lingering manhood in him that needed persuasion—that struggle was hopeless. You have driven him to despair. But treat him differently: "You have done wrong and you are paying the penalty. But I am sorry for you and should like to see you doing something worthy of yourself. You are too good a man for this. You are worth too much to yourself and to the world and in the sight of God. There is strength in your man's heart for another struggle, and if you make one fight more, the last and the best, you shall be victor yet. I believe in you, and good men and women will believe in you, and God and His Christ believe in you"—and you have put new heart and soul into

him, vigour, hope, resolve. By the grace of God you have made a man of him.

Broaden your view. We are to become the active agents of God's forgiveness in society. Abhorrence of sin there must be. We who have seen in Jesus Christ the ideal of humanity and have learned from Him its worth, must continue to hate sin which debauches and degrades and corrupts the souls He died to save. We must manifest our horror and our detestation of lives given up to dishonesty, impurity, vice, and crime. But we who have learned the meaning of the Cross of Christ must show that for the individual whose sin we loathe there is in our hearts a divine compassion. Through intensest condemnation of sin must shine supernal pity for the sinner. Ever we must cherish and ever manifest the belief that the sinning one, so fallen, so lost, is capable of rising to the life God meant him to live. Play the Pharisee, if you will; broaden your phylacteries; and for a pretense make long prayers; let every action breathe disdain of men and women who wander from the light; lift your hands and cry: "Back, back, I am holier than

thou!"—and you plunge such people deeper into evil. You inflame in their souls a hatred of good. But let them feel the nobility of character and consecration. Let them hear the music and the songs of happy goodness. Let them see the beauty of holiness. And through all let them know that you expect such things as these from them. Make them believe that they have it in them to attain; that God hopes nothing less from them; that you and all good men and women everywhere and all the powers that soon or late win for man some sacred goal wait to befriend and succour them; that God Himself is reaching out a hand to draw them from the horrible pit and the miry clay and is ready to put a new song in their mouth—and on behalf of Christ and in His name you have forgiven the sins of men. Then you shall pray with a deeper meaning than ever in your life before: *Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven.* May that prayer never cease upon this earth till sin shall cease! May that prayer avail for all mankind!

VII

Bring Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From the Evil

God has cast us into this life, as it were into an alembic, where, after a previous existence which we have forgotten, we are condemned to be remade, renewed, purified, by suffering, by strife, by passion, by doubt, disease and death. All these evils we endure for our good, for our purification, and, so to speak, to make us perfect. From age to age, from race to race, we accomplish a tardy progress, tardy but certain: an advance of which, in spite of all the sceptics say, the proofs are manifest. If all the imperfections of our being and all the woes of our estate, drive at discouraging and terrifying us, on the other hand all our more noble faculties, which have been bestowed upon us that we may know God and seek after perfection, do make for our salvation and deliver us from doubt, from fear, and even from Death.—*George Sand.*

VII

BRING US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL

THE Revised Version has made an important change in the second clause of this petition. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" is the familiar form of the prayer. "Deliver us from the evil one" is the reading of the Revised Version. The suggestion is not a happy one. The old reading was better. The petition as we have always read it is sufficiently loaded with intellectual and moral difficulties. The new reading would introduce an added element of unreality. The modern man or woman is by no means convinced of the existence of a malign, seducing, ubiquitous personage here described as "the evil one." The devout soul does not wish to be led away from genuine prayer by an irrelevant discussion of "the personality of the devil." Such considerations would ruin the prayer as a vehicle for the utterance of deep spiritual need. Few of

us to-day, if this form were insisted upon, would offer the prayer with realizing earnestness. We might as a prescribed duty repeat a formula. The prayer would seldom rise spontaneously to our lips.

We are under no obligation to follow the Revisers in this particular. It is admitted that the definite article is in the original and that the words must mean "the evil." But it is also admitted that the words may be either masculine or neuter. Writing in Greek, whether one wished to say "Deliver us from the evil" or "Deliver us from the evil person" (of the masculine gender) he would use the same form of words. What is meant, therefore, is not a question of grammar but of interpretation. It is perfectly true that the oriental method of expression always tended towards personification, so that there is a strong presumption in favour of the new reading. But we are not orientals. We do not find it helpful to think of evil in this embodied, personal way. It is as natural for us to think of evil in the abstract as for the oriental to think of it in the concrete. And as the form of words

leaves the choice open to us we shall do well to dismiss from our minds the idea of personification as we try to understand this prayer. But the word "the" should be retained—*Deliver us from the evil.* For it may be that the entire significance and value of the prayer, *Bring us not into temptation*, will turn upon our understanding of "the evil" from which we pray to be delivered.

The "intellectual and moral difficulties" with which the prayer is charged arise out of the felt impropriety of conceiving that God could under any circumstances lead His people into temptation. Why should we pray *Bring us not into temptation* since we cannot without doing violence to all that we believe and feel about God imagine that He is likely to lead us into it? The words bring before us the picture of a cruel or cunning spirit seeking to inveigle poor souls into wrong. The Mephistopheles of the Faust legend may entrap souls in this way. The demon of the Hartz mountains, appearing in the folk-lore of many centuries, may lay plots for individual souls, induce them to sign a contract in

their own blood, and rejoice in the consummation of their ruin. But what has all this to do with the God whom Jesus has taught us to call "Father"? In the Book of Samuel it is stated that the "anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them saying, 'Go, number Israel and Judah.'" This the historian treats as a gross offense, and so, in a later age, the compiler of the Book of Chronicles, refusing to admit that the hand of God was in the evil suggestion, declares that it was Satan who moved David to this act. It is not for us to fall below the spirituality of the writers who have given us the Books of Chronicles. We must not revert to the idea of a God who seduces the souls of His people into sin or even plans to surround them with such evil influences that we need to pray to Him, *Bring us not into temptation.* It would almost seem as though the author of the Epistle of James had this difficulty of our prayer and the interpretation of the prayer in mind when he wrote the strong words about "temptation" with which his letter opens. *Count it all joy, my brethren,* says James, *when ye fall*

into manifold temptations. Blessed is the man, he says, *who endureth temptation.* And then—as though this clause in the Lord's Prayer came to check his rejoicing and his sense of the benediction involved in the endurance of temptation—he hastens to add, *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God, Himself untempted, tempteth no man.* These sayings of James may seem to be themselves obscure. Undoubtedly we need to have it explained why we should count it joy to fall into temptation yet revolt from the conception that God has planned the joy for us. Yet if his vigorous statement is to stand unchallenged, *God tempteth no man,* why should we school ourselves to pray to God, *Bring us not into temptation?* Why beseech Him not to do that which James says He never does and never can do?

Our way of using the word "tempt" is in large measure responsible for the difficulty. The word does not primarily mean "to seduce, to entice, to solicit, to allure into sin." This meaning is now stereotyped in the word "temptation," but the earlier meaning was "to try," "to make

test of," and it lives on in our word "attempt" and in "tentative" which is really "temptative," or if you like "attemptative," a step taken in making the attempt or trial. In the Old Testament and the New Testament alike the words which are translated "tempt" and "temptation" are frequently used to express the fact of trial, of testing, not by any means in a bad sense. The first instance of its use is in an early chapter of Genesis where God is said to "tempt" Abraham in the matter of the offering of his son Isaac as a sacrifice, the meaning there being that God planned to "test" Abraham and put his faith to the proof. In the Twenty-sixth Psalm occurs the prayer "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me," and the word for "prove" is that which is elsewhere translated "tempt." In the New Testament the words here translated "tempt" and "temptation" are used about sixty times. Frequently they point to evil trial, but not invariably so. They retain their meaning of "trial," "testing," without necessarily an evil significance. "Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto Him, saith unto

Philip, 'Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?' And this He said to *prove* Philip, for He Himself knew what He would do;" to *prove* Philip, test him, see what he would answer and what was in his mind—but the word is our word "tempt." "And when they—Paul and Silas—were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia"—*assayed, attempted* to go into Bithynia—and it is the same word "tempt." And the Epistle to the Hebrews, referring to the trial of Abraham's faith, uses the same word, which in our New Testament is translated "tried"—"By faith, Abraham being *tried*, offered up Isaac." And with these illustrations in view the meaning of the petition in the Lord's Prayer becomes plain: "Bring us not into circumstances of great moral trial; make not too large a demand upon our faith, courage, and resolution; bring us not into the fiery testing which may prove too severe for our yielding hearts; our Father, bring us not into conditions which shall too sorely try us, for we know ourselves and our weakness, and we may fail!"

This explanation of the meaning of the word

removes from the petition the element of irreverence. There can be no impropriety in thinking that God leads us into a position in which faith, hope, and love may all be put to the test. But the question remains, and with full force. Ought we to pray to be kept from such circumstances and conditions? Ought we to want to avoid the great occasion which may greatly try us? Ought we not, as James desired us, to rejoice when we are called upon to pass through such experiences, and for the reason he gives, that such occasions of trial breed in us a heroic steadfastness? Ought we to pray for escape from such grounding in noble character?

We are in the habit of assuming that escape from crowded, stifling streets and towering buildings shutting out God's sun and airs to the seashore and the mountain slopes is escape from a life charged with contagion and an omnipresent menace to health into comparative security. In the main, doubtless, we are right. Yet it must have occurred to most of you and more than once that whereas you expect to come back from a holiday refreshed, braced up, and in condition

to resist disease, you fall a prey too quickly to one or other of the minor physical ailments which distress us. We say that the good effect of the country holiday has soon worn off. We ought to have been able to withstand the "cold" or the epidemic "grippe" or what not after such a period of recuperation. And it has been suggested with some show of reason that the immunity from contagion which we enjoyed during our stay in the high altitudes or by the sea has really left us less capable of resisting the infection of a germ-laden air when we return. While we were living in it we, in a way, grew accustomed to it; our system braced itself to withstand its attacks. But after living for some time in the purer atmosphere, then, when we come back to the polluted air of the great cities, we feel the change keenly and are ready to succumb. The author of "The Soul of London" quotes a keen-eyed modern physician as declaring, "Why, I would rather attend fifty London street-rats with half a lung apiece than one great hulking farm bailiff. These are the fellows, after all, the London scaramouches, for getting over an ill-

ness." "Don't you see, my dear sir," he goes on, "your problem is to breed disease-resisting men? Purify the cities if you can. Get rid of smoke and foul air, if you can. But breed a race fitted to inhabit them in any case."

May there not be something like this in the moral life? Is escape from every occasion and circumstance of trial, immunity from the testing and sifting of a many-coloured, active life crowded with responsibilities, good for us all and good for us always? One of the really great seers of our time and country, a man whose clear sight into the heart of things is God's good gift to this generation, has embodied this view in an amazingly farcical story of a town supposed to be incorruptible because untested and untried. Through the screams of laughter which wake the very echoes of the surrounding country, the voice of the moralist makes itself heard. And when at last with shame and in public humiliation the town emerges from the trial in which it has so utterly failed, it is allowed by act of legislature, upon prayer and petition, to change its name and leave one word out of the motto that for many

years had graced the town's official seal, which for the future reads—"Lead us into temptation!" Has the insight of a great teacher for once betrayed him? Then did John Milton err as grievously? "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart;" did it dwell in such aloofness from man's common lot that he mistook the conditions under which alone the heroic life may be well lived? In the noblest of English prose Milton roundly asserts:

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for not without dust and heat. . . . Were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person more than the restraint of ten vicious."

Surely there is wisdom in this teaching; and our hearts leap up to answer the more ringing cry of James, "Count it all joy, my beloved brethren, when ye fall into these manifold occa-

sions of the testing and trial and training of your sturdy character!"

From this point of view it would seem that we are contemplating an utterly impossible prayer. Without delaying one minute to consider the more obvious and vulgar situations of trial in which the best men and women may sometimes find themselves, without discussing the vicissitudes of life which bring us into conditions where the concrete and gross sins of life may wait for those who fail in the testing of their strength, we see that life is full, literally full, of scenes and times of trial. And what is more, the fuller and richer our life becomes, the more numerous, complicated, and exacting will such occasions be. Towards this full rich life the activities of every one of us are tending. Towards this full rich life tend all the movements of our time. What has happened in the physical universe has its spiritual significance. The world is shrinking under our enterprise. We shake hands across the Atlantic. We have a nodding acquaintance with all the ends of the earth. The world is our parish. We think in continents. We take up

the isles as a very little thing. And the millions of miles of cable, telegraph, and telephone wires are the nerves of our world. The most sheltered and the most insignificant of human beings throughout the whole sphere of civilization upon this planet is affected; while the lives of men and women like yourselves are transformed from centre to circumference by the swiftly-rushing century. Responsibility, influence, power—these are yours; responsibility, influence, power which Roman emperors never knew!

These things, too, you desire; and we should be speaking falsely in our prayers and to our own souls if we denied it. You think and plan and toil and fight for wealth, yet not for the satisfaction of writing down a numeral with a line of cyphers after it, and for the pleasure of saying, "So many millions are mine." The money is to you and to your world the outward symbol of success, consideration, position, influence, direction, command, power, vast responsibility, often a crushing burden, yet a burden you would not be rid of if you could. And by such a life as this you are daily and hourly tried. Not only is

financial, intellectual, nervous, or physical failure a possibility of such a life; moral failure stares you in the face. You may grow selfish, material, unsympathetic, hard. It is one of the possibilities of your life that you may come to regard material success as the measure of manhood and womanhood. You may come to despise those who have set their ambitions on the finer things of the spirit. You may come to believe that material good is the only good; you may think too much of wealth and all that wealth can do and give; while you think too little, oh, sadly too little, of unseen but eternal realities, faith, hope, love, goodness, Christ, heaven, immortality—the things that are brighter than fame, richer than gold, more enduring than imperial possessions, the things that wealth cannot buy. You may grow cruel in the exercise of your power, careless of another's rights, reckless of his wrongs; you may crush through all opposition and fight your way onward heedless of the wreck and ruin that you cause. You know and I know—you know better than I know and could give me twenty illustrations of the truth of this for one

which I could give you—that such developments —or such degeneration—do as a matter of fact frequently result from the positions of "trial" in which such a life as yours abounds.

The truth is that as you think about this you perceive that there is no incident of our daily life which does not constitute an occasion of trial. Life could not be lived if we were not constantly doing little kindnesses to one another. One might say that a world without the courtesies, amenities, graces of our days, without the spirit of kindness and without the *fact* of kindness, would be hell, only that we cannot really conceive of such a hideous world. Yet we may be tried, tested, and some of us may fail in the testing, by a favour which we give or receive. You may grow positively insolent in your fashion of doing somebody a good turn. One has known a person confer a kindness in such a way that but for the grace of God the recipient of it would hate the giver for the remainder of his natural life. Or you may become so hard, so cold, so mechanical with it all, and apparently so grudging, that you have turned a virtue into some-

thing undistinguishable from a vice. And in the same way, one may receive a favour or repeated favours in a way to make all the angels weep. He may show himself grasping, ungracious, ungrateful; he may hate himself for accepting your kindness, hate the world which, he says, has forced him into a position in which he needs your kindness, and hate you because you are able to do the kindness. Certainly it needs grace on both sides. Often you must respect a man very highly and love him very much before you can accept a kindness from him. And that both of you shall be better and happier for it—well, it needs some element of human goodness in you both. These, it may be repeated, are occasions of trial within the meaning of the word—yet who would not choose annihilation rather than life without them?

We are tried by the love of our dearest. Love is the most precious thing in the world. Yet good things corrupted show themselves more dangerous than things intrinsically evil. It is one of the supreme tragedies of our life that love itself may be perverted, abused, and its holy in-

fluences corrupted. Have you not seen for yourself a man grow year by year a worse man because, as it seems, some good woman has loved him too well? It may be a wife; it may be a mother; in either case the love has been selfless, radiant, and, we would fain hope, deathless. When we try to think in terms of the unthinkable and unimaginable glories of the love of God, we have to fall back upon the memories and suggestions of such human love as this. But we have seen the boy grow up to accept these as his right, to become an ingrate, a churl, a brute unresponsive to the mother-love. We have seen the man accept all, give nothing, claim everything, grow selfish, arrogant, tyrannical, an insufferable offense in the eyes of all chivalrous manhood. Yes, and women, too! There are women upon whom you can lavish all the wealth of human love, upon whom you can pour out the richest, truest, noblest devotion of which the strong man's heart is capable; women for whom a man may toil and slave and for whom the whole world's protective tenderness would not seem to the husband's or the lover's eyes too great

a gift, who grow selfish, self-contained and self-seeking, cold, disdainful, insensate—not sweeter and purer and lovelier for such a divine affection. These, we perceive once more, are occasions of testing and of trial. Yet who would not spurn the gift of life itself if life were robbed of love?

One thing then has grown clear. We cannot pray this prayer without qualification, without understanding, using the words in their plain grammatical meaning, accepting them literally and the implication of them. The petition must needs be interpreted. We cannot pray to be saved from the occasions which may try and test our manhood and our womanhood. Responsibility, success, and positions of influence test us: we do not want to avoid them. Human kindness given or received tries us: we will not pray for less of it but for more. Love is the supreme test: we will not pray to be delivered from it. O God, give us more love and better; teach us to love; and give us Thyself to love! In what sense, then, can we pray this prayer, "Bring us not into circumstances that try and test us"?

It is the cry of conscious weakness. "The Lord's Prayer," says a Scotch divine, "is not merely for heroes, but for the timid, the inex-

perienced. The Teacher is considerate and allows time for reaching the heights of heroism on which St. James stood when he wrote, 'Count it all joy when ye fall into manifold trials.'" There was a moment when Christ said to His disciples, *Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My name's sake.* And He bade them *rejoice and be exceeding glad.* But in this petition He recognizes the frailty of our human nature. He makes concession to our weakness. He remembers that we are dust. This prayer interpreted, paraphrased—it is as though we should cry in our realized feebleness:

Our Father, we count not ourselves amongst the great and heroic of Thy children. We are not of the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs. We dread the fiery trial. We doubt our power of resistance. Let us not be tried beyond our strength to withstand. We are Thy children, we know; but we are only little children, weak, ignorant, and we dare not confront the storms and dangers which the great brave men and women of old have faced with intrepid hearts. We know our weakness. We know not what these unexplored dangers are. Have mercy

upon our ignorance and our waywardness and our feebleness. Bring us not into the storm of conflict that may overwhelm us nor the fiery trial which may destroy our faith. Our Father, bring us not into temptation too great and hard for us!

Perhaps it seems to you an anti-climax? Ah, well; if you are so strong and so splendid in your strength, if you know that nothing can move you from your heroic devotion to duty; if you know that neither the cares of this world, nor the deceitfulness of riches, nor gain nor loss nor love nor glory nor the desire of the eyes nor the pride of life nor all the kingdoms of the world can seduce you from a life of holiness nor shake your faith in God—so be it! This cry of weakness is not for you. Only the ancient warning speaks: *Let him that thinketh he stand, take heed lest he fall.* Paul, when he was weak, felt himself to be strong. Perhaps when we feel ourselves strong, perhaps then we are weak. Perhaps this prayer is still proper upon our lips: *Bring us not into temptation.*

But it does not end here—God be thanked. *But deliver us from the evil*—not from evil, from *the* evil. From what evil? If there is any reality in the prayer it is here: *from the evil in*

our own hearts which may make these times of testing and of trial a menace to us! Why should responsibility or riches, why should kindness or love, why should any of the thousand experiences of life involving for us only that which is intrinsically good, become a menace to us? Surely because of that in ourselves which corrupts the good and turns it to evil issues! If a kindness makes a churl of us, what churlishness there must be in our hearts! If the strife for wealth and power or possession of wealth and power makes us cruel, what potentiality of cruelty there must be hidden somewhere in our souls! If love which should make us divine, itself divine and the spark of divinity in us, becomes diabolic in its operations or wakes up a lingering diabolism within us, what evil, base and bestial, there must be in our nature warring with this love divine! If the love of man or woman or of God freely poured out upon us in gifts of unspeakable richness narrows, hardens, coarsens, and embitters us—then, what depths of unloveliness, what hateful possibilities, slumber within our souls! From this evil, the evil in us which wakes and grows and strains at the leash and leaps out upon us and masters us in the hour

of crisis, Good Lord deliver us! In our weakness we cry to Thee:

O God, bring us not into the occasion which shall try us as by fire. Yet if it be Thy will that we shall fall into manifold trials, if Thou in Thy love dost ordain that through the proving of our faith steadfastness shall be made perfect, then we pray Thee, take care of us, O our Father, and deliver us from the evil within us which taking advantage of the hour of moral crisis might turn our hearts from Thee! Thou doest all things well. Bring us not into temptation; yet if it be Thy will that we shall grow strong through conflict and pure through resistance of desire, deliver us from the evil in our hearts, and keep us so near unto Thyself that every hour of every day while life shall last for ourselves and for our loved ones we may pray:

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN,
HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
THY KINGDOM COME.
THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN HEAVEN, SO ON EARTH.
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.
AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS.
AND BRING US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL,

through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen!

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